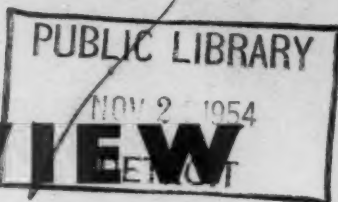


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Edited by GEOFFREY SHARP

VOL. XV, NO. 4

NOVEMBER, 1954

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## *The Harmonic Problem in Twelve-tone Music*

BY

GEORGE PERLE

THE primary precompositional assumptions of the twelve-tone system, unlike those of diatonic tonality which describe both linear and harmonic properties and resources, specifically define only the linear ordering of the notes. A single criterion of simultaneity appears to be consistent with this ordering: namely, that elements which are adjacent to each other in the set may be vertically combined. Such a procedure, the verticalization of linear relationships, was employed to a certain extent in atonal music prior to the formulation of the twelve-tone system and is universally accepted by twelve-tone composers. However, it appears as one only among many devices which secure simultaneity and never as a limiting principle, that is, as the sole criterion of allowable vertical relations. The verticalization of linearly ordered elements imposes certain compositional restrictions which quite preclude its exclusive government of harmonic relations. But even verticalization, the only method of harmonic ordering ostensibly premised upon the primary axioms of the twelve-tone system, has a much more ambiguous relationship to these primary axioms than it is generally assumed to have. In spite of these difficulties the unique arrangement of the twelve tones of the set must be consistently meaningful in the context of the work, for otherwise it is impossible to justify the employment of the system in the first place. This means that harmonic procedures must be found which will not disrupt the autonomy of the work, a task which requires considerable ingenuity in view of the absence of an axiomatic foundation upon which to base these procedures.

To admit the existence of this profoundly problematical aspect of twelve-tone composition is by no means to question the validity of the system, as some Schönberg enthusiasts evidently suppose. One of the latter asserts: "There is no problem of the history of polyphony to which Schönberg has not been able to find the answer",<sup>1</sup> a bold statement which implies a serious underestimation of the nature of polyphony, and therefore also of Schönberg's contribution. The evolution of polyphony is a procession of ultimately irresolvable contradictions. The interrelation of horizontal and vertical elements is effected by every expansion in one dimension or the other. Every affirmation of the key-centre only promotes its self-destructive opposite: modulation. Every harmonic acquisition requires a reintegration of the tonal order which engenders it.

But even if we admit that polyphony in general is of an essentially problematical nature, it is still important to differentiate between the implications of the primary axioms of different musical systems. Schönberg's statement that "Bach sometimes operated with the twelve tones in such a manner that one

---

<sup>1</sup> René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg and His School*, translated from the French by Dika Newlin, Philosophical Library, New York, 1949.

would be inclined to call him the first twelve-tone composer",<sup>2</sup> and his identification of Beethoven's treatment of the "*Muss es sein?*" motive with the precompositional transformations of the twelve-tone set<sup>3</sup> reveal nothing about Bach, Beethoven or Schönberg, except that the latter was embarrassed by the revolutionary implications of his discovery and therefore preferred to gloss over distinctions between his methods and those of his predecessors.

In both diatonic tonality and the twelve-tone system a strict precompositional ordering principle is defined: in the former case, the triad; in the latter, adjacency of the elements in the set. Every tonal combination is either itself a triad or, where the vertical aspect is weakened to the extent that the harmonic moment is clearly of a transitional character, an element of a progression whose orientation is a triad. In twelve-tone music, on the other hand, simultaneity may or may not be generated by the only ordering principle provided by the system, and where it is not so generated it bears no necessary relation to this principle.

Unless the twelve-tone system is to be justified merely as a basis for monodic music, certain compositional attitudes must be formulated in response to this practical problem. It would seem, for example, that simultaneities which conform to the adjacency axiom ought to be somehow aurally differentiable from those which do not so conform, since otherwise the verticalization of the set would not be a valid compositional device. As more or less of a corollary to this requirement the possibility suggests itself, where non-adjacent tones are vertically associated, of deploying every dynamic, motivial, and rhythmic means to fortify the harmonic moment against independent harmonic meaning. Another approach, not necessarily related to the above, would be the government of harmonic detail by some consistent principle, independent, or semi-independent of the ordering of elements in the set, as, for example, the assumption of some pervasive harmonic texture based on the preferential employment of certain intervallic combinations. Under some circumstances such a procedure might be questioned on the ground that it violates the premise that a work of art ought to be autonomous, or self-contained, in so far as its internal material relations are concerned. These formulations are not mere *a priori*, theoretical assumptions. They involve the mind and ear of both composer and listener in a real, practical sense, even where the involvement operates on a subconscious level; they are verified as fully by the musical deficiencies which follow from their insufficient realization as by the positive results which depend upon their observance.

The beginning of Schönberg's fourth Quartet is a relatively simple illustration of the verticalization procedure. In Ex. 1, bars 6-9 of this work, the inverted set is stated as a linear structure and simultaneously verticalized into four three-note combinations. The adjacencies which are vertically revealed, however, do not necessarily conform to the horizontal ordering of the elements. At (a) and (d) the chords do so conform when read from top to bottom, but the

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Schönberg, *Style and Idea*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1950, p. 42. [Also published by Williams & Norgate, London, 1951 (Ed.).]

<sup>3</sup> Schönberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 110f.

vertical adjacencies into which the other chords may be analysed do not correspond to the linear arrangement. We may make the following observation concerning twelve-tone harmonic practice as revealed in this and almost

**Ex. 1** Schönberg, Fourth String Quartet

(Vln. II)  
(Vln. I  
Vla.  
Vcl.)

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

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all other twelve-tone compositions: when linearly adjacent elements are simultaneously stated, the original ordering may be disregarded so long as the harmonic entity is identical with a segment of the set—a segment whose harmonic meaning resides in its content, and not in the order of its constituent elements. The harmonic relevance of the linear structure is in inverse proportion to the number of elements which constitute this segment. Obviously, if the harmonic structure contains only two notes the vertical and the horizontal adjacency will be identical. And if it contains twelve notes it will, considered only on the basis of its content in conformity with the Schönbergian harmonic principle, have no relation to a unique linear arrangement since it could function as a verticalization of any set.

Two variants of what is now orthodox twelve-tone theory, contributions respectively of one of the earliest dodecaphonists, Josef Hauer—whose work is said to pre-date the Schönbergian system—and of one of the youngest, the American composer Milton Babbitt, have vital bearing upon this question. Hauer bisects every set into two equal segments, within each of which only content, not order, is specified; no precompositional linear ordering exists, and therefore no possibility of violating such an ordering when the set is vertically arranged. Conceived in the light of Schönberg's work and precisely the opposite of Hauer's, Babbitt's verticalizations retain the linear adjacencies, as in the Schönberg example at (a) and (d). A vertical combination of only two elements will reveal exactly as much of the linear ordering with Babbitt as with Schönberg, but from this point on in Babbitt's procedure the degree to which a chord will reveal total set structure varies in direct ratio to the number of elements which constitute the chord, so that a twelve-note chord in Babbitt's music could be analysed as a verticalization of one, and only one, set. It would, of course, be impossible to determine whether this set was understood in its prime or in its retrograde aspect, but this question would be immaterial since it would not affect set structure.

Further consideration of the Schönberg example discloses another problematic aspect of twelve-tone harmony. As in tonal music, we are presented here with a melody and its chordal accompaniment. It is important to distinguish, however, between the two systems in respect to the manner in

which the two planes are interrelated. In tonal music each melodic element has an unambiguous degree of relationship to the chord which serves as its background. Obviously, such a situation does not obtain in Schönberg's music, in spite of external analogies with distinctive features of the tonal system. At (a) the melodic note might be interpreted as a "chordal" element since it is contiguous in the set to the three-note segment which is verticalized to accompany it. At (b) and (d) the melodic notes are "non-chordal" from this point of view. In all three cases the melodic note anticipates an element of the subsequent vertical structure. At (e) the  $b\flat$  in the melody functions in a double capacity: as the final element of the linear statement of the set and as a member of the final verticalized segment. But these various distinctions have no clear functional meaning in the absence of a *a priori* harmonic categories.

The absence of an explicit harmonic interrelation between the horizontal and the vertical plane does not, however, necessarily invalidate the method of chord construction under discussion. The musical functions of the respective parts are sufficiently differentiated in the present example, so that the melodic elements are heard in a distinct dimension, and therefore do not interfere with the adjacency criterion which determines the accompanying chords. (In this connection it is conceivable that some question may be raised about the situation at (e), where it is necessary to "count" an element which is heard melodically in order to complete the vertical statement of the set.) There are, however, a good many instances in twelve-tone music where the simultaneity does not reveal the distinction between adjacent and non-adjacent elements which the employment of the set presupposes. In Ex. 2 everything in the context and structure of the harmonic moment  $d\ g\sharp\ f\sharp$  conceals the fact that the  $d$  and  $f\sharp$  are a verticalized adjacency and the  $g\sharp$  a linearly stated element of another aspect of the set.

#### Ex. 2

Webern Piano Variations, I, bars 32-33



It is quite clear that the simultaneities which Schönberg and others employ are ultimately dependent upon a criterion of selection in relation to which set structure plays a secondary rôle. Mr. O. W. Neighbour, dealing with this problem in his article "In Defence of Schönberg",<sup>4</sup> suggests that Schönberg's harmony "is an extension of post-Wagnerian chromatic writing, but that the development of its ellipses and ambiguities has led to such a wide range of situations that it is more bewildering at first encounter than some other systems", and that there "is some kind of tonality present". It is observable that

<sup>4</sup> *Music and Letters*, January, 1952.



one of the basic attitudes mentioned above, the regulation of harmonic detail by some consistent principle more or less independent of the set, operates in Ex. 1. In this instance a certain harmonic interval, the minor sixth, is employed in preference to others, although it still does not function as a standard of harmonic reference, as does the triad in tonal music. The four three-note segments of the set can each be stated in six different arrangements, among which adjacent elements at the interval of a minor sixth will be present as follows: in two verticalizations of the first segment, in none of the second segment, in three of the third segment, and in two of the fourth segment. The appearance of this interval as an element of every simultaneity in the example except that at (c), where it is precluded by the set structure, can be explained only as the result of a definite criterion of selection and not as a consequence of either set structure or chance. That the musical results and presumably the musical intention are to be interpreted in terms of the harmonic relations of diatonic tonality, as Mr. Neighbour assumes, seems to this writer highly doubtful.

The harmonic practice of Alban Berg, however, frequently invites such interpretation. In several compositions the linear structure of the set also suggests triadic characteristics, so that correlation between vertical and horizontal details is clearer than with Schönberg. We will not discuss the violin Concerto or *Der Wein*, in both of which definite tonal ends dictate the specific dodecaphonic procedures, but rather the *Lyric Suite*, where no such primary purpose operates. In all three cases the harmonic problem is resolved through the assumption of a certain harmonic texture generated by tonal, chromatic, and dodecaphonic details, uniquely associated in each work.



The underlined groups of elements in Ex. 3 illustrate segments of the set which may be stated vertically as triads or seventh chords. But even where the harmonic moment is not thus derived, tonal details continue to operate as the principal criteria of harmonic relationships. Consistent with this approach is the special treatment accorded to the interval of the perfect fifth in the first movement. Each half of the set is permutable into a series of perfect fifths, the auxiliary, or implied set thus formed (Ex. 4) being employed in a secondary capacity as the source of certain harmonic and melodic events. It is stated in vertical segments, for instance, as an introduction, even before the initial appearance of the prime set (Ex. 3), and is stated linearly in its retrograde aspect in the cello at bars 7-9.



The extremely primitive structure of the implied set results in the immediate aural identification of linear and harmonic relationships, but these are of such salient and limited character as to render this set quite useless except for a minimum of compositional purposes. The tonal associations of these and other details provide a basis for harmonic reference, a relatively ambiguous one to be sure, but resulting to a limited extent in functional differentiation, degrees of deviation, and even harmonic direction.

Ernst Křenek has attempted to rationalize that wide area of dodecaphonic harmonic practice whose motivations and sources are only indirectly (if at all) related to the primary axioms of the system. In his article, "New Developments of the Twelve-tone Technique",<sup>5</sup> Křenek affirms that the system has not concerned itself with organizing chord relations, but that "it has been fundamentally polyphonic and has regulated theoretically the sounds occurring as results of simultaneously progressing voices according to an evaluation of the intervals thus formed". However, there is only limited evidence of the operation of such an "evaluation" criterion and none at all for the assertion that this principle operates on any level other than the empirical, or, more frequently, the impressionistic. In his *Studies in Counterpoint*<sup>6</sup> Křenek hypothesizes, as a basis for the evaluation of intervals, an hierarchy of degrees of "tension" according to which the intervals are classified as consonances, "mild" dissonances, and "sharp" dissonances. Křenek suggests that acoustical phenomena may explain the relative degrees of tension, but "the decision of what shall be considered a dissonance and how it should be handled is an arbitrary assumption inherent in a particular style, for it depends exclusively on aesthetic concepts". These aesthetic concepts on the basis of which the intervals are presumably evaluated, however, are nowhere stated. The consonant-dissonant dichotomy, as Sessions points out in his *Harmonic Practice*, is an altogether inadequate concept even where we are concerned with advanced tonal procedures, and in any case "dissonantal tension . . . is a matter, not only of intervals, but of context".<sup>7</sup> But the context of a twelve-tone work is precompositionally determined only by the linear relations defined by the set, and therefore no assertion of a general nature can be made concerning harmonic *properties* of the system, but only the general statement that harmonic *procedures* should be such as not to invalidate the precompositional assumptions. This is far from "regulating theoretically the sounds occurring as results of simultaneously progressing voices according to an evaluation of the intervals thus formed".

Babbitt, in "The Function of Set Structure in the Twelve-Tone System" (unpublished), goes so far as to dispute the presence of degrees of tension where there is no "criterion of interval stability". He asserts that Křenek's classification of intervals presupposes the triad as such a criterion, and "inasmuch as the triad possesses no autonomous function in the twelve-tone system, there would seem to be less than no reason to deduce principles from it". If we

<sup>5</sup> THE MUSIC REVIEW, May, 1943.

<sup>6</sup> G. Schirmer, New York, 1940.

<sup>7</sup> Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1951, pp. 401f.



accept Babbitt's theory, relative harmonic tensions which are felt to function in a twelve-tone context presumably do so because the compositional procedures suggest triadic associations. In any event, it does not seem tenable that tension degrees operate as a necessary principle of dodecaphonic harmonic structure; and even where it is assumed that the harmonic texture is premised upon their operation, this would merely provide another example of "the government of harmonic detail by some consistent principle independent, or semi-independent of the ordering of elements in the set". Of course the set might be especially contrived and manipulated to support these particular vertical preconceptions, but this would itself indicate that the latter are not to be understood as axiomatic harmonic assumptions of the twelve-tone system.

An intolerable contradiction is found at the very source of the twelve-tone system if we reject Babbitt's theory that "the whole conception of consonance and dissonance in triadic music derives from the assumption of triadic structure as the criterion of interval stability" in favour of the more popular notion of Křenek and others that these distinctions are based on tension degrees which are ultimately "explained by vibration-ratios, combination-tones, or other acoustical phenomena", and are therefore as relevant to twelve-tone as to any other music. The origin of the twelve tones themselves is the tempered chromatic scale, which is understood as a necessary compromise in relation to the tone-material of diatonic tonality, providing mere approximations of the "real" tones, which are infinite in number. Precisely the same relationship is presupposed for the twelve-tone system in its harmonic aspect if we accept Křenek's tension-degree theory. But it is indisputable that in general the twelve tones are "real" in relation to the primary, linear aspect of the system, and that the partitioning of the octave into twelve equal parts is in this case not to be understood as a practicable approximation of some impossible ideal procedure. Such a fundamental contradiction between the most elementary linear and vertical assumptions would certainly question the validity of the dodecaphonic concept as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

The chromatic scale, or better, the twelve-tone scale, simply divides the octave into twelve equal parts, just as the whole-tone scale divides it into six equal parts. The former entails tension evaluations as little as the latter does, or as little as the latter would in a context generated by itself. It is quite possible that some interesting adumbrations of the twelve-tone concept as a system, rather than as a "method" (Schönberg) or a "technique" (Křenek), are to be found in the music of Moussorgsky, Debussy and other supposedly peripheral composers, in which tonal tension is often negated through the employment of intervals dividing the octave into two, three, four, or six equal parts, and through the guidance of moving parts by symmetrical rather than tonal considerations (Ex. 5).

For Křenek's evaluation of intervals in terms of their tension degree, Babbitt shows that it is possible to substitute a criterion which is inherent in

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. Schnippering, "Atonalität und temperierte Stimmung" in *Melos*, January, 1950, and "Von der Logik der Zwölftonmusik" in *Melos*, November, 1950.

the primary premises of the system itself. In connection with certain set properties which are not discussed here, although intimately related to our subject, each interval may be classified according to the manner in which it divides the octave, or, what amounts to the same thing, according to the number of non-identical elements it will generate in a series. Thus the intervals of one, five, seven and eleven semitones will each generate twelve notes, the intervals of two and ten semitones will each generate six notes, the intervals of three and nine semitones will each generate four notes, the intervals of four and eight semitones will each generate three notes, and the interval of six semitones will generate two notes. It must be understood, of course, that

**Ex. 5**

Moussorgsky, Boris Godounov, Act II, Clock Scene



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Debussy, Jardins sous la Pluie



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this system of classification has a totally different function from that proposed by Křenek and is concerned with larger operations which involve the total complex of forty-eight sets, that is, the prime set together with its transformations and transpositions.

It should be pointed out that inasmuch as the octave relation is recognized as establishing an acoustical boundary for all precompositional assumptions, an evaluation of intervallic quality, or tension, is implied as regards this one interval. This fact may cast some light on the meaning of the rule prohibiting the octave relation in twelve-tone music.<sup>9</sup> Questionable formulations have been advanced to explain this rule, whose real intent is probably the scrapping of the evaluation of intervallic quality in general through the rejection of the only untempered interval, the one interval which inevitably entails such an evaluation in any imaginable musical context.

The verticalization of linearly adjacent elements of the set concerns only one—a primarily homophonic—aspect of simultaneity in twelve-tone music. The vertical association of non-adjacent elements is normally the result of a simultaneous statement of two or more set-members of the complex, a primarily

<sup>9</sup> Consistent doubling for textural purposes, where the octave has a dynamic and not a harmonic function, is found occasionally. Where tonal implications are present, as in much of Berg's work, the rule is not observed.

polyphonic procedure. Here again the problem of selection is complicated by the absence of a precompositional standard of harmonic reference, the function fulfilled by the triad in tonal music. In his essay, "Composition with Twelve Tones",<sup>10</sup> Schönberg, citing as the controlling factor the only twelve-tone precept of vertical combination—prohibition of the octave—describes various methods for securing linear simultaneity. Only one of these methods has been consistently employed by Schönberg. In his own words: "Later, especially in larger works, I changed my original idea, if necessary, to fit the following conditions: the inversion a fifth below of the first six tones, the antecedent, should not produce a repetition of one of these six tones, but should bring forth the hitherto unused six tones of the chromatic scale. Thus, the consequent of the basic set, the tones 7 to 12, comprises the tones of this inversion, but, of course, in a different order".<sup>11</sup> This means that the prime set must be so constructed that when it is simultaneously stated with its inversion each half of the prime combines with the corresponding half of the inversion to form an aggregate of twelve non-repeated notes. This aggregate is not identical with the precompositional linear ordering, but it is consistent with the primary axioms to which the set conforms. Having no derivation other than the set, it is a vertical corollary of the horizontal structure of the latter, whose ordering it reveals.

The implications of this discovery, of which a purely negative property—avoidance of the octave—was the ostensible reason for its employment, were not realized by Schönberg and were almost totally ignored by his pupils and followers. It remained for Milton Babbitt to disclose, in, unfortunately, a very few, very brief, and very abstruse theoretical writings,<sup>12</sup> that here we have the key to an autonomous method of twelve-tone composition, in which all aspects of the musical work—form, the constitution and interrelation of linear and vertical details, even rhythm—will be referable to a basic set, just as these elements are referable to the triad in tonal composition. This principle, which Babbitt has termed "combinatoriality", is certainly Arnold Schönberg's most significant contribution within his larger formulation of the primary axioms of the twelve-tone system. It is with no intent of minimizing his genius that we point to certain inexplicable restrictions in his own application of the combinatoriality principle. The procedure which Schönberg describes limits his aggregate structures to those generated through the vertical alignment of six-note segments of the prime and its inversion, with the initial notes of the two sets separated by the interval of a perfect fifth. But directly analogous procedures of which he was evidently unaware will permit the combinatorial association of sets separated by other intervals, of sets of any aspect, of sets characterized by other types of segmental structure, and finally of more than two sets.

<sup>10</sup> Schönberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 102ff.

<sup>11</sup> Schönberg, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned unpublished dissertation, I know only of two short articles, which appeared in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Fall, 1950, pp. 264ff., and Spring, 1950, pp. 57ff. The former is a review of the Schönberg article, the latter a review of Leibowitz' *Schönberg et son école* and *Qu'est-ce que la musique de douze sons?*

Just as every expansion of the harmonic vocabulary in tonality has its melodic implications, so both procedures which we have described for securing simultaneity in twelve-tone music are reflected on a linear plane. We shall not discuss at the present time the inferences which Babbitt has drawn in this connection as a consequence of the combinatoriality principle. Concerning the generally accepted practice of verticalizing the linearly ordered elements of the set in order to construct chords, it was explained earlier in this paper that such chords disregard the original ordering to a degree, the set being considered for harmonic purposes as a collection of segments of specified but unordered content. It is observable in much twelve-tone music that there is a tendency toward a weakening of the linearly premised order, so that melodic details appear as freely linearized segments of the set. Thus a reciprocal process seems to be correlating vertical and horizontal procedures, and, incidentally, merging the Schönbergian concept with that of Hauer.

A re-evaluation of the theories of Hauer has, in fact, been long overdue. Any attempt to generalize concerning the nature of twelve-tone relations is baffled at the outset by the statistical description of ultimate resources: that there are exactly 479,001,600 possible linear arrangements of the twelve tones and only one twelve-tone chord. A most ingenious solution occurred to Hauer, who combined both the linear and the chordal approach into a single concept which permits any ordering of the twelve tones to be comprehended as a permuted combination of two six-note segments. By specifying only the content of each segment and at the same time disregarding transpositional distinctions, Hauer succeeds in reducing the total material to 80 such segments, eight of which will each generate a set when paired with its own transposition, so that there are altogether forty-four basic sets, or tropes. It has been pointed out in this paper that essential aspects of the Schönbergian system also require the set to be regarded as a collection of segments. Almost every generalized description of set properties is dependent upon this conception of set structure. A study of Hauer's forty-four tropes reveals whatever special properties any one of the 479,001,600 sets acquires as a consequence of bisection into equal segments, and suggests a relatively simple system of classification on the basis of these properties. This result presupposes, in the first place, a characterization of the segment according to its inherent properties—which in turn derive from its total intervallic content—and, in the second place, a description of inter-segmental relations within the set. A self-evident extension of the method which Hauer employed in the construction of his six-note segments will disclose the possibilities of every other type of segmentation, so that all sets may be pre-compositionally characterized, regardless of the number of segments which they contain and the number of elements within each segment.<sup>13</sup>

The various attitudes toward the harmonic aspect of twelve-tone composition which are revealed in the many styles that have appeared in the few years since the inception of the system reflect basically different attitudes toward the

<sup>13</sup> Hauer's system is described in his *Vom Melos zur Pauke*, Vienna, 1925, and *Zwölftontechnik*, Vienna, 1926. An excellent summary is found in Karl Eschman, *Changing Forms in Modern Music*, E. C. Schirmer Music Company, Boston, 1945, pp. 83ff.

primary assumptions which the composers hold in common. Such differences are frequently found among the compositions of even a single author. For example: the set may generate independent motives, or "secondary functions", in relation to which its own structure will be very much in the background, as in some of Křenek's compositions;<sup>14</sup> at the opposite extreme is the thematic use of the set itself, as in much of Berg's work and, to a lesser extent, Schönberg's fourth Quartet; with Webern the compositional details are directly derived from the set, but neither the former nor the latter are employed as "themes"; again, special sets may be contrived which will permit the infiltration of tonal details as in the Berg violin Concerto, of modal characteristics as in the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* by Křenek, and even of elements of the Hebrew liturgical chant as in my own *Hebrew Melodies*. Finally, there are procedures which fundamentally alter the primary axioms of the system. These last developments are intimately related to the problems discussed here, but we shall not deal with them at this time since the main purpose of the present study is to indicate how the contradictions by which they are motivated may be resolved within the tenets of the "classical" twelve-tone system. The fact that these contradictions may be so resolved, however, by no means implies that other systems based on modifications of "classical" twelve-tone precepts may not also contain significant possibilities.<sup>15</sup>

The contradictions which resulted from the presence of the tritone in the modal system were met with wonderful resourcefulness by the mediaeval polyphonists. Perhaps the *diabolus in musica* of the twelve-tone system, simultaneity in the absence of axiomatic harmonic assumptions, will have equally fruitful consequences.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Robert Erickson, "Křenek's later Music", *THE MUSIC REVIEW*, February, 1948.

<sup>15</sup> Articles which deal with these problems are: Richard S. Hill, "Schönberg's Tone-Rows and the Tonal System of the Future", *Musical Quarterly*, January, 1936; Křenek, *op. cit.*, *THE MUSIC REVIEW*, May, 1943; Willi Reich, "Versuch einer Geschichte der Zwölftonmusik, in *Alte und neue Musik*, Zürich, 1952. A radical departure from the conventional twelve-tone practice is described in my articles, "Evolution of the Tone-Row", *THE MUSIC REVIEW*, November, 1941, and "Twelve-Tone Tonality", *The Monthly Musical Record*, October, 1943. The former article, especially, now seems to me to be immature in many respects. However, in spite of some doubtful conclusions and certain questionable hypotheses, the *modus operandi* which I suggested at that time still seems to me to be a significant practical approach toward a solution of the harmonic problem in twelve-tone music.

# The Character of Lulu: Wedekind's and Berg's conceptions compared

BY

DONALD MITCHELL

## I: BERG AND WEDEKIND

ON the title-page of Berg's opera appears the phrase, "*Lulu* . . . after the tragedies *Earth-Spirit* and *Pandora's Box* by Frank Wedekind".<sup>1</sup> Berg's "after", however, is more a matter of compression and condensation than of verbal transformation; the transformation occurs in Berg's music, not in his handling of Wedekind's text. This, of course, is what one would expect; but it is, I think, of interest to note how closely Berg followed the dramatist's dialogue and the chronological course of the two dramas; and, lastly, how much of the two plays Berg was able to embrace within a single opera. The relationship between the structure of the plays and the opera may be exposed by means of a simple diagram:

LULU (ACT ONE)		
Opera	<i>Earth-Spirit</i>	<i>Pandora's Box</i>
Prologue .. .. .	Prologue	—
Scene 1 (Schwarz' studio) <sup>2</sup> .. .. .	Act I, Scenes 1-9	—
Interlude .. .. .	—	—
Scene 2 (Schwarz' house) .. .. .	Act II, Scenes 1-7	—
Interlude .. .. .	—	—
Scene 3 (Theatre) .. .. .	Act III, Scenes 1-9	—
LULU (ACT TWO)		
Scene 1 (Schön's home) .. .. .	Act IV, Scenes 1-8	—
Interlude (Film) .. .. .	—	—
Scene 2 (Schön's home) .. .. .	—	Act I
LULU (ACT THREE) <sup>3</sup>		
Scene 1 (Lulu's salon?) .. .. .	—	Act II?
Interlude (Variations) .. .. .	—	—
Scene 2 (a London attic) .. .. .	—	Act III

<sup>1</sup> *Lulu*, Oper von Alban Berg nach den Tragödien *Erdegeist* und *Büchse der Pandora* von Frank Wedekind; vocal score by Erwin Stein, Universal-Edition.

<sup>2</sup> My indications in the diagram of each scene's *décor* derive from the Essen company's performance (at the Holland Festival, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> The disposition of the last act, while I believe it to be correct, is, of course, not based on personal acquaintance with the composer's original draft.



Thus Berg's *Lulu* included the four acts of *Earth-Spirit*, and (presumably) the three of *Pandora's Box*; the whole action of Wedekind's two dramas is compressed into the structure of a three act opera, a feat of condensation effected with considerable literary skill. As is, of course, well-known, Berg did not live to complete his third act in every detail, although it seems that the music was composed more or less from first note to last. Dika Newlin<sup>4</sup> refers to the act as not being "in shape for publication", and varied rumours of attempts at (a) publication of Berg's short score (?), and (b) completion by another hand (e.g., by Arnold Schönberg) have remained rumours. As the opera stands at present, if the work is not to cease altogether at the end of act two, and if the music from the third act which Berg fully prepared for use in the *Lulu* Suite<sup>5</sup> is to be heard in something like its proper dramatic context, the action must run straight on, from the death of Dr. Schön (act two/1) and Lulu's subsequent escape from prison and alliance with Alwa (act two's interlude and scene 2), to the London attic (act three/2)<sup>6</sup>; we miss, thereby, the news of Alwa's financial ruin and the threats of exposure aimed at Lulu by the unscrupulous Marquis Casti-Piani (hence the couple's flight to England). Most important of all, the absence of the opera's act three/1 means a substantial loss in the dramatic development of the character of the Lesbian Countess Geschwitz. If *Earth-Spirit* is more particularly a vehicle for Lulu, it is in *Pandora's Box* that Geschwitz comes into her own. Wedekind's own remarks on the Countess are highly illuminating:

The tragic central figure of the play [*i.e.*, *Pandora's Box*] is not Lulu . . . but Countess Geschwitz. Apart from an intrigue here and there, Lulu plays an entirely passive role in all three acts; Countess Geschwitz on the other hand in the first act furnishes an example of what one can justifiably describe as super-human self-sacrifice [*i.e.*, Geschwitz' substitution of herself for Lulu in the prison hospital]. In the second act the progress of the plot forces her to summon all her spiritual resources in the attempt to conquer the terrible destiny of abnormality with which she is burdened; after which, in the third act, having borne the most fearful torments of soul with stoical composure, she sacrifices her life in defence of her friend [*i.e.*, is slaughtered by Jack the Ripper while trying to protect Lulu].<sup>7</sup>

In Wedekind's dramas, therefore, there is a change of emphasis in *Pandora's Box*; it is Geschwitz, not Lulu, who is "the tragic central figure". Since Berg's libretto so strictly coincides with Wedekind's text, it is not unreasonable, when examining the opera, to look for a corresponding shift in dramatic and musical emphasis from act two/2 onwards; and while there is no foreword to *Earth-Spirit* by Wedekind, there is little evidence to suggest that Lulu's rôle

<sup>4</sup> Dika Newlin: *Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg*, New York, 1947, p. 275.

<sup>5</sup> Berg's Symphonic Suite from *Lulu* was put together and first performed (1934) while he was still working on the opera; it included (from the music of act three) the "Variations" which, it seems, were to function as the orchestral interlude between the act's two scenes, and the final *adagio* which brings the second scene (and, indeed, the whole opera) to its magnificent conclusion.

<sup>6</sup> This was the scheme adopted for the recent production of *Lulu* by the Essen opera company. For further details of the manner in which the producer, Dr. Hans Hartleb, ingeniously set the "Variations" and *adagio* within a skeletal framework of dialogue and dramatic action drawn from *Pandora's Box*, act three (the London attic), see my reviews in *The Musical Times*, and *Opera*, September, *Musical Opinion*, October, and *Tempo*, Autumn, 1953.

<sup>7</sup> This quotation from Wedekind's foreword to *Pandora's Box* is taken from *Five Tragedies of Sex* translated by Frances Fawcett and Stephen Spender with an Introduction by Leon Feuchtwanger, London, 1952. All subsequent quotations are from this edition of Wedekind's plays.

therein is any the less "passive" than in *Pandora's Box*. Indeed, I do not think it is stretching the bounds of probability too far to see in the fated Dr. Schön, whom Lulu almost casually murders, a tragic figure comparable to Geschwitz, although tragic for the opposite reasons. He is ruined by Lulu's love, while Geschwitz is ruined by the lack of it. It should be kept in mind, none the less, that Lulu's statement (after she has shot Dr. Schön "with five consecutive bullets on the ascending chromatics of the violins, C-sharp, D, E-flat, E, F")<sup>8</sup>—"The only man I ever loved!"—is not so much a conscience-stricken cry, as an "innocent" announcement of an unemotional fact, in the same category, perhaps, as her remark to Schön's son: "Isn't that the very sofa on which your father bled to death?"

The only big cut Berg made in either of Wedekind's texts is at the beginning of the first act of *Pandora's Box*, where Geschwitz explains the device by which Lulu was spirited out of prison. The missing narrative dialogue is brilliantly realized both musically and visually in the famous "film" interlude which links the scenes of act two.

## II: BERG, LIBRETTIST AND COMPOSER

This very brief scrutiny of the two plays on which *Lulu* is founded permits us to draw a few conclusions about Wedekind's dramatic intentions with a reasonable certainty of their accuracy. Lulu, we may suggest, he conceived as a largely "passive" figure, in the words of Feuchtwanger, "the innocent corruptress . . . whose effect on bourgeois society can only be destructive".<sup>9</sup> Arthur Eloesser writes that "the earth-spirit is Eve as she was on the first day, Wedekind's ideal woman; he meant this character of Lulu to be played in a spirit of perfect innocence".<sup>10</sup> The destructive results of Lulu's innocence are largely seen in the respective deaths of Dr. Schön in *Earth-Spirit* and Geschwitz in *Pandora's Box*; and, for me, the basic dramatic situation of *Lulu* resides in this triangle—Schön-Lulu-Geschwitz—in which Lulu occupies the apex, and Schön and Geschwitz opposite, but corresponding, angles. How did Berg meet the demands of dramatic development and characterization in his opera? How far did he amend and adapt?

As we have seen from section I above, Berg did not tamper with, but condensed, Wedekind's text; the essential dialogue, action and chronology remain unaltered. From this we may justifiably conclude that Berg's intentions were, perhaps, not so far removed from Wedekind's, although we must not underestimate the potential transformation that may be effected through an opera's music without a word of the original drama being changed. (Newlin<sup>11</sup> writes that the original inspiration for *Lulu* was the *première* of *Pandora's Box*, presented in Vienna on 29th May, 1905. The performance was preceded by an introductory speech from Karl Kraus (*Die Fackel*) "in which the completely amoral Lulu is (*sic*) justified and defended; [Berg] entirely agreed with Kraus's explanation of her character, which would make her a female version

<sup>8</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky: *Music Since 1900* (3rd edn.), New York, 1949, p. 428.

<sup>9</sup> Feuchtwanger: *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Eloesser: *Modern German Literature*, New York, 1933, p. 127.

<sup>11</sup> Newlin: *op. cit.*, pp. 275-276.



of Don Juan".) Certainly as far as Geschwitz is concerned, Berg exactly carries out Wedekind's thoughts as disclosed in the paragraph from his foreword to *Pandora's Box* quoted in section I. Throughout the latter half of the opera, Geschwitz' rôle is increasingly prominent, and there is no doubt whatever that she is the most successfully characterized of the opera's *dramatis personae*. Although the third act is not available—thus one is defeated in the task of making final assessments and evaluations—the superb and ennobling *adagio* offers us a distinct hint as to the musical atmosphere of at least the last act's last scene where Geschwitz stands as a "tragic central figure". When she sings the opera's last sung notes ("Lulu!—My angel!—Let me see you once more!—I am near you—will stay near you—in eternity!"), one realizes that Berg has not only fulfilled the condition Wedekind specifies in his foreword—"I was fully aware that I must over and over neutralise and outdo [Rodrigo's (the 'clown's')] mockery [of Geschwitz] by my serious treatment of the Countess's fate, and that in the end this tragic seriousness must have emerged as unconditional victor if the work was to have fulfilled its purpose"—but also, in the great *adagio*, composed a profound meditation upon the tragedy of Geschwitz' abnormal, unrequited and yet essentially selfless love. The *adagio*, in fact, is a requiem for both Lulu and Geschwitz, with the serious treatment of the latter's fate, in strict accordance with Wedekind's desire, emerging (dramatically and spiritually) as "unconditional victor".

Gschwitz, in fact, is shaped as Wedekind shaped her, if with far greater intensity and artistic success, and Dr. Schön, Geschwitz' symbolic opposite number (or angle), in more ways than one, similarly undergoes a rich musical endowment in both life and death, a highly satisfying characterization which surely would have pleased his creator. When one bears in mind Berg's almost total adherence to Wedekind's texts, there are good grounds for supposing an intimate alliance between his conception of Lulu and Wedekind's. (It is odd that Berg—and presumably Wedekind—should have agreed with Kraus' depiction of Lulu as "a female version of Don Juan", which implies a rôle more active than passive.) There is, of course, a serious objection to approaching the topic of Lulu *via* the libretto rather than the music, but with so complex a title figure under discussion all approaches are permissible that have as their humble aim the elucidation of the composer's art. As far as the essential character of Lulu is concerned, most commentators would seem to be in agreement on her main features. There is much common ground between the above-quoted comments of Feuchtwanger, Eloesser and Karl Kraus. Hans Hartleb, the Essen company's producer, writes that Lulu is "a completely natural and unintellectual creature continuously being driven into new entanglements by sexus"<sup>12</sup>; I suggested, in *Opera*, that "Lulu . . . is not a person, but . . . one aspect of the human animal magnified to an enormous degree. She is a 'myth', necessarily representing a partial truth as a whole one. Herein lies her fatal attraction and her universal appeal. She is not a Universal

<sup>12</sup> In a communication that replied to my criticism (published in *Opera*) of the Essen production of *Lulu*. Dr. Hartleb's views have not, so far, achieved print in this country, although *Opera* undertook to give them a hearing.

Mother, but rather the Universal Mistress we all desire to possess or emulate".<sup>13</sup> Disagreements arise—which involve an examination of the music—when deciding in what respects Lulu is a character who "develops", and, above all, how far her feelings are profoundly engaged in the situations and relationships in which she finds herself. Wedekind, I think, has made his position clear; and, in *Earth-Spirit* and *Pandora's Box*, Lulu is a decisively non-developing rôle, "passive" throughout; events occur to, round and about Lulu, not because she "wills" but because she is—irrevocably—what she is. One might say that from the point of view of the coherence of Wedekind's drama, it is vital that Lulu does *not* develop. She is akin to a straight-burning candle flame. The moths clatter their wings, singe themselves and burn themselves to death. The flame burns on, supremely alluring, supremely irresponsible and quite unaware of the litter of corpses. What would happen to the symbolism, however, if the flame developed feelings and a conscience?

This, in effect, seems to me to be the crucial turning-point in our survey of Berg's *Lulu*. Faithful to Wedekind in all else, and while still faithful to the text, Berg gives birth to a Lulu, not burdened with a moral conscience, but with many a deep feeling from which, logically, a conscience would have emerged; only the conscience, in fact, does not. We are left, instead, with a host of disengaged and dramatically unjustifiable feelings. His Lulu, indeed, is a most unhappy coalition; half Wedekind's Earth-Spirit, half a suffering woman. There are two obvious reasons why Berg was obliged to make this fundamental alteration to Wedekind's conception of his heroine. First, it is almost impossible for music to preserve a neutral attitude; and it is, in Wedekind's plays, Lulu's neutrality, her utter "innocence", committed to no morality, which is her most distinguishing feature. Secondly, as Dr. Hartleb rightly comments in his communication, Berg was doubtless interested in a "development", not a static situation; he composed the opera, one might surmise, with both ears on the final *adagio*, and the deeply-felt *adagio* had to be prepared by previous outbreaks of deep feelings. So far, so sensible. But one cannot avoid wondering why Berg, in these circumstances, did not further amend the text—as it stands stage action and speech are at constant variance with the music—and why he chose in the first place a libretto which, in Hans Keller's words, "does not allow the composer to fulfil opera's essential purpose, *i.e.* to realize the emotions of the *dramatis personae*".<sup>14</sup> To take Lulu as our main example, it is, paradoxically, where Berg "realizes" her emotions that the fatal inconsistency appears which flaws the opera's dramatic structure throughout. That the operatic Lulu has profound and poignant feelings drastically denied to her purely theatrical counterpart is easily ascertained by glancing at two passages in the score. First, compare Lulu's great cry upon her return home from prison—"Oh, freedom! God in heaven!", perhaps the most moving bars in the whole opera (act two/2)—with the corresponding passage in *Pandora's Box* (act one). She speaks the same words, admittedly, but, from her entrance into the room until the end of the act, Wedekind directs that she is to address

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 549-551.

<sup>14</sup> Hans Keller: *Lulu*, MR, XIV/4, pp. 302-303.

her companions "in the most cheerful tone". Berg's music tells us most beautifully that she has suffered, and that she knows she has suffered; Wedekind's play tells us she is the same old Lulu, the same old flame, as unaffected by prison as by the deaths of her lovers. In *Earth-Spirit* (act two/3) Lulu makes a declaration of her attitude to Dr. Schön, speaking, according to the stage-directions, "in a decided tone":

If I belong to anyone in the world, I belong to you. Without you I should be—I wouldn't care to say where. You took me by the hand, gave me food and clothing when I tried to steal your watch. Do you think I can forget a thing like that?

In the opera (act one/2), a transformation has occurred. No longer is the statement a typically Lulu-ish recital of plain and emotionally detached facts; her words are cast in the form of a short melodrama and projected over a noble theme (one of the work's leading motives, substantially dwelt upon in the *adagio*) which symbolizes Lulu's affection for Dr. Schön:<sup>15</sup>

**Lento**  
= ♩ (= 58)  
gesprochen

*poco*

615 „Mei-nes Man-nes“ . . . *p* Wenn ich einem Menschen auf dieser Welt angehöre, gehöre

Str. H

*poco accel.* *poco cresc.*

(beiläufig) *(p)*

ich Ihnen—ohne Sie wäre ich— ich will nicht sagen, wo— Sie haben mich bei der Hand ge-ommen, mir zu emen gegeben, mich

620 etc.

Hr. *p ma espr.*

The exceptional beauty of this passage leaves us in no doubt as to the depth of Lulu's love. The "love", however, was not originally part of Wedekind's dramatic intentions—indeed, it is destructive of them—but has been introduced by the composer. It seems ungracious and ungrateful to criticize or "discredit" a musical moment so moving and so expressive, and yet, if the passage quoted above is "true" of Berg's Lulu, it somewhat invalidates the actions of (Wedekind's) Lulu in the next act when she casually shoots Dr. Schön. (Musically speaking, "The only man I ever loved!" (see section I above) does not receive an emotional musical setting comparable to "Meines

<sup>15</sup> Willi Reich: *Alban Berg*, Vienna, 1937. In many ways, of course, the great *adagio* immortalizes not only Lulu and Geschwitz but also Schön; thus the eternal triangle is commemorated nobly in *Lulu* (act three/2). The music example is reproduced by kind permission of Universal Edition, London.

Mannes"; often, as here, Berg succeeds in presenting Wedekind's non-emotional Lulu, particularly in his treatment of the exchange between Schwarz and Lulu (act one/I), "Can you speak the truth?". "I don't know". "Do you believe in a creator?". "I don't know", etc.)

### III. CONCLUSIONS

I believe that I have shown in sections I and II that Berg himself precipitated a large-scale dramatic confusion when basically (either consciously or unconsciously) altering the constitution and character of the opera's Lulu without duly amending the text and dramatic action. While bearing in mind the tantalizingly incomplete last act which, if finished, might have made many events clearer, I think there is little doubt that *Lulu*, as it stands, is not a convincing musico-dramatic entity; what goes on in the orchestra pit and on the stage fail to match, and one suspects that the third act, however conclusive, would not have succeeded in balancing the two levels. This inconsistency, perhaps, would be an altogether shattering flaw were it not for the fact that the music, unlike the drama, is satisfyingly consistent on its own masterly level; and I suggest that the problem of Lulu's at present ill-integrated and alarmingly erratic characterization could be partially overcome by deriving the true state of dramatic affairs from the music rather than the libretto and its origins. In short, the next production of *Lulu* (and is there any reason why Covent Garden should not take a few practical steps in this direction?) must jettison Wedekind and preconceived notions founded on *Earth-Spirit* and *Pandora's Box*, and concentrate on Berg's transformed and developing Lulu drawn from the opera. It is useless, in my view, to attempt to reproduce Wedekind's static "innocent corruptress" who plays "an entirely passive role" when, in musical terms, she is most active and experienced in her feelings (as in "Meines Mannes" quoted above). Since Berg allows his Lulu to indulge in emotional disclosures which would not disgrace a tragic operatic heroine of a less eccentric disposition, the producer of the opera must respond by creating a stage figure and environment from which these disclosures may naturally proceed. The trouble with Hartleb's Essen production was not that Lulu developed from act to act, but that she developed from impossible beginnings. By permitting Lulu to develop at all, Hartleb was half-way towards the realization of Berg's Lulu, but by too great an insistence on her as a "completely natural and unintellectual creature" he was still trying to cling to Wedekind's coat-tails; and, as I have suggested, Berg's and Wedekind's Lulus are almost mutually exclusive. Or, more accurately, Berg's music excludes Wedekind.

If nothing else, this rudimentary comparison between Wedekind's text and Berg's opera proves that a large part of the difficulties of producing a convincing *Lulu* is due to Berg's own curious approach and attitude to his heroine (an inconsistency that extends besides to other characters, Alwa especially). One may also reasonably conclude that the course his adaptation eventually pursued was forced upon him by the very nature of the art he practised. Music ceases to be music when it ceases to express feelings; and to write an opera about a heroine virtually without any feelings would not only have been beyond Berg's creative powers, but, as a creative musician of genius, beneath his contempt.

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# Hindemith's *Marienleben* (1922-1948)

## An assessment of its two versions

BY

RUDOLF STEPHAN

ALL composers who—at the turn of the century—felt unable to confine themselves to the traditional features of style, were compelled to organize their material afresh either by breaking consciously with tradition or by continuing independently on the line of its chief *stimuli*. Such purposes were mainly served by the miniature forms of *Lied* and piano piece.<sup>1</sup> Once cyclic form had become problematic with the disintegration of tonality, it is not surprising to notice that the first larger compositions to put a new style into practice were cycles of songs in which the unity of the poetic idiom fostered the musical continuity.

In that sense Arnold Schönberg's *Buch der Hängenden Gärten*, op. 15 (completed in 1908, after poems by Stefan George) is the earliest specimen of a uniformly organized new style whose formal logistics result from the dialectic relationship between motives (not melodies) and their harmony. The implicit musical abundance of Schönberg's music—which could be neither understandable nor agreeable to the poet—has transformed the poems by liquidating their stylization, thereby depriving them of their rigidity. *Pierrot Lunaire*, op. 21 (1912), shows more extremist principles of composition. Schönberg's tendency to objectify the morbid imagination of A. Giraud and Otto Erich Hartleben (his German translator) leads him to conjure up old musical patterns. This is not synonymous with a subtraction of all subjective matter; on the contrary, subjectivity is its sole guarantor. The ancient static forms are therefore not superimposed on an alien musical language, but are adjusted to the musical material, *i.e.* they have become *dynamic*.

Approximately a decade later Hindemith follows an analogous trail in his song cycles, *Die junge Magd*, op. 23 (on poems by Georg Trakl), and *Das Marienleben*, op. 27 (on poems by Rilke). In op. 23 direct expression prevails, whereas in op. 27 deliberate formalization becomes apparent. *Pierrot*, as well as *Marienleben*,—in contrast to the earlier works which had been conceived from the angle of sonority—show a strong tendency towards polyphony, in some numbers completely determining the manner of the part-writing. That the character of polyphonic style diverges in each composer is partly conditioned by the difference of tradition to which each feels indebted: Schönberg starts from Mahler, while Hindemith stems from Reger, the classicist.<sup>2</sup> Therefore Hindemith's polyphonic style emerges more clearly from Bach than Schönberg's, and *concertante* elements become more and more important from the string Quartet, op. 22, onward until they are fully developed in his compositions of the middle "Twenties", chiefly in opp. 31-39. The motoric impulse

<sup>1</sup> Bartók's *Bagatelles*, op. 6, and Schönberg's Three piano Pieces, op. 11, were composed in 1908.

<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of the term "Neo-classicism" cf. the attempt at a definition in *Deutsche Universitätszeitung* VII, 1952, H. 16/17.





The former is shaped as a *fugato* whose metrically unfettered principal subject thrives on its *espressivo* and appears motivically closely connected with its thematic continuation. The movement shows formal freedom by turning its middle section into a thematic development of the principal subject. The string Trio's fugue<sup>3</sup> adheres to traditional formal precepts (one could also have investigated the even more problematic one in the fourth Quartet, op. 32); the subject is a pure horizontal "line" and therefore lacking in characteristic qualities, and thoroughly objective. The uninhibited dynamism which had ruptured the formal pattern in the string Quartet, op. 22, has been suppressed and its subjective contents have been replaced by a "boundless *baroque Spiel-freude*" (Korte).<sup>4</sup> Also a comparison of the first movements of op. 16 and of the Trio, op. 34, shows the same results perhaps even more sharply.

One tends to find even in Hindemith's *juvenilia*, however, a clearly defined personal style in which sound and rhythm are primary elements. Even if melodic intensification occasionally inclines towards polyphony—as in Ex. 1 and 3—the melody itself never degenerates into a motoric linear pattern without relation to harmony, as is characteristic of the early neo-classical works (Ex. 2 and 4). Yet even in that sphere one may find among Hindemith's compositions certain movements of great expressive power, hardly infected by the germ of historicism (probably the best known is the *Notturmo* from the violin Concerto, op. 36/3): movements which actually contradict their own doctrine of aesthetics.

The first version of the *Marienleben* shows up the whole problematic situation inherent in a transition from a free to a formally rigid style of composition. From the point of view of style, a certain hesitancy may be observed even on superficial investigation, a hesitancy characteristic of a work composed in a transitional situation. It is well known that the variety of compositional possibilities at Hindemith's disposal in 1922/23 enhanced the complexity of expression seemingly demanded by Rilke's poems; equally well known is the fact that the composer did not link the words with the music by way of illustration, but that he interpreted their expressive contents either by way of simple strains (no. 11: here, as in no. 10, every word is so full of import that the voice had to resort to a *recitativo* delivery if the poem should remain intelligible) or, ignoring the poetic contents, by choosing musical form patterns which should act "somehow" as implementations of the poem. In any case, the first version of the *Marienleben* presented the whole gamut of possible emotions within the range of Hindemith's musical idiom for the first time. In 1948 appeared the new version of this *Marienleben* (announced as early as 1937), after four songs (nos. 1, 5, 7 and 8) had already been published in 1939 in a

<sup>3</sup> Cf. T. Wiesengrund-Adorno in *Die Musik*, XIX/1, 1927/28, p. 24 ff. and the apologetic studies: F. Willms, "Paul Hindemith" in *Von neuer Musik*, 1925, p. 78-123, and H. Mersmann in *Die Kammermusik*, Vol. 4, 1930, p. 145 ff.; dealing with the above mentioned fugue of the string Trio, op. 34, we read in Mersmann, *op. cit.* p. 155: "... What Hindemith has been able to achieve in this finale can be called a climax far beyond his own development" and in W.-Adorno, *op. cit.* p. 27: "... The final Fugue is in every respect below Hindemith's standard; its correction was effected a long time ago in other works of the composer ...".

<sup>4</sup> The terms "*Musikan!*" and "*Spielfreudigkeit*" have been subjected to a deeply penetrating and witty criticism in Ernst Křenek's pamphlet *Ueber neue Musik*, Vienna, 1937.

rather "operatic" version with orchestral accompaniment. The composer added a comprehensive preface to this new version in which he invites the interested student "to immerse himself in the problems which are hidden beneath the surface and not within easy reach".

How far off seem the days when Hindemith, asked to explain or to analyse those of his compositions which were then being performed at the festival of Donaueschingen in 1922, was only willing to give the following terse reply:

"... I cannot give analyses of my works, because I do not know how to explain a piece of music in a few words; I prefer to write a new piece in that time. Besides, I believe that my stuff is easy to understand for people with ears and therefore an analysis is superfluous. One cannot help people without ears with such makeshift expedients. I also refuse to write down a few themes only as they always tend to give a wrong impression".<sup>5</sup>

That was more than 30 years ago. In 1937 the composer published the theoretical part of his treatise, *Die Unterweisung im Tonsatz*, Volume I, in which he developed his opinions on the basis of arguments mainly derived from acoustics and from *Tonpsychologie*. These opinions have not remained uncontradicted, especially when, from problematic premises, conclusions have been reached which may be called dangerous without undue exaggeration.<sup>6</sup> Since then Hindemith's musical idiom has submitted to a large degree to these self-imposed demands.

In the preface to the new version of the *Marienleben* the original version is subjected to severe self-criticism. The vocal part is said to have been "dictated by considerations of a non-vocal nature" and to have contained "progressions difficult and sometimes impossible to execute".<sup>7</sup> Hindemith then continues by asserting that the song cycle has become "an object of utility", "nothing to fuss about", that it contains "badly balanced chromatics, complicated intervallic skips and tonally incommensurable features...". Mistakes of the latter kind are excused by ignorance of the later "discovered" laws, promulgated in the *Unterweisung*, errors of the former type are explained by "inexperience in vocal composition".<sup>8</sup> The proof deduced for this contention carries little conviction, however, as the ability to intone difficult intervals remains in the first place a task for the ear and only in the second instance a matter for the vocal chords (preface, pages iii/iv). In the third paragraph Hindemith explains the structural plan of the new version in which songs 1-4, 5-9, 10-12 and 13-15 have been grouped together. Every such group should contain a dynamic and expressive climax. According to Hindemith the dynamic climax of the whole *opus* is "*Die Hochzeit zu Kana*" (no. 9) and he indicates "*Pietà*" as its expressive counterpart. In the following paragraph each item is discussed and the reasons are given which have led to its

<sup>5</sup> *Neue Musikzeitung*, year 43, 1922, p. 329.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. H. Scholz in *Die Musik*, XXX, 1938, Vol. 2, p. 528-35; René Leibowitz in *L'Arche*, III, Nov., 1946, H. 21, p. 111, also p. 115 ff. and J. Handschin, *Der Toncharakter*, 1948, p. 130 f.

<sup>7</sup> F. Willms, however, writes in his purely apologetic study: "... As far as purely technical problems of performance are concerned, they are of no exceptional difficulty, either for singer or accompanist. As regards difficult intervals, Hindemith makes lesser demands on the singer's powers of intonation than Strauss or Schreker...".

<sup>8</sup> At that time Hindemith had composed many vocal compositions: operas and songs, half of which had already been published, viz. opp. 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 23/1-2.



revision or re-writing. In the main the revision aims at more comfortable singability and at more clearly perceptible tonality.

In the fifth section of the preface Hindemith discusses the character of keys which he develops on the basis of original, but totally arbitrary premises. He bases everything on a row, no. 1, arrived at in the *Unterweisung*, which has also determined the sequel of fugues in *Ludus tonalis*.<sup>9</sup> The starting point of that row is "E" which in the *Marienleben* becomes the keynote. To this "E" tonality as to every other key, Hindemith attributes a certain "emotional climate" and an "ideological category". In proportion as the relations of the different keys to the central tonality become weakened (all of them are rather naively determined from the angle of row 1), the composer allots a more distant "ideological category". As he himself has admitted the arbitrariness of the argument (he calls it an "agreement"), nothing more shall be said about it here.

For reasons of elucidation the analysis of the subject of no. 14, "*Vom Tode Mariä*" II, may be quoted in the new version (preface, page ix).

"... The tonal contemplation embodied there could lead approximately to the following sequel of thoughts and emotions: we feel the unification with infinity (C, bar 1) which, with its unavoidable inexorability (C sharp, 2-3) and also with its infinite mildness (diffuse G, 4), infuses in us the sensation of minuteness. Although we have faith in fate (D, 7) we are nevertheless tortured by a little feeling of incomprehensiveness (B flat, 8). The pious one will see in the saviour (E, 9-10) and in his once mortal mother (B, 11) his leaders into the region of the purity of death (E flat, 11-12)".

What hearer without absolute pitch and without having memorized a table of key interpretations is able, with the best will in the world, to feel according to this prescription? Hindemith, forestalling such remonstrances, adds immediately: "... I don't expect over-enthusiastic acceptance of my tendency to burden the sound with so much ideological matter". The preface is wound up by some remarks about new music, of a confessional kind and therefore not without interest for the understanding of the composer's basic approach.

The single items may now be classified with regard to the degree to which they have been subjected to revision.

- I. Taken over unchanged from the first version into the new one: no. 12 ("*Stillung Mariä mit dem Auferstandenen*").
- II. Revisions:
  - (1) Single notes only (re-arranged, eliminated or added) in nos. 4, 5, 11;
  - (2) Thoroughly revised, but retaining the original thematic matter: nos. 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15;
  - (3) Changed structure, with thematic "substance" retained from version I: no. 9 ("*Hochzeit zu Kana*").
- III. Entirely new compositions: nos. 3 and 7.

The fundamental tendency of these "emendations" emerges clearly from group II/1. The simplification in harmony and tonality shows at the beginning

<sup>9</sup> Vol. I, new edition, 1940, p. 75 ff. and p. 119.

of no. 4 ("*Mariä Heimsuchung*"), where a complicated bitonal harmonic process has been reduced to a relationship of fifths with the help of the old musical panacea, "pedal point".

Ruhig bewegt (♩ = 44-50)

**Ex. 5a** *pizz*

Ruhig bewegt (♩ bis 66)

**Ex. 5b** *p*

Later in this song the composer has interpolated some bars by forcibly altering the vocal part. In no. 5, "*Argwohn Joseph's*", an analogous situation is to be found, whereas in "*Pietà*" (no. 11) only a few notes have been modified.

The items of group II/2 show in principle the same type of changes. As Hindemith believes he has discovered more serious shortcomings in the first versions of these items, the modifications are naturally more frequent and more consequential. For instance, in no. 1, the well balanced passage "*In dieser Nacht . . .*" now becomes a mere transition and the magical dissonant triplets above the chord of fourths are eliminated without further ado.

**Ex. 6a**

in dieser Nacht wird dem Knaben die Mut - ter ge -

*ppp* *la.*

-bo - ren

Similarly, the passage, "*Ach . . . sie fühlten sich . . .*" (op. 27, bar 52 ff.), so impressive with its unresolved suspensions, has been dropped. In no. 8 the *recitativo* section has been reduced in size, and in nos. 4 and 10 single sections of melody have been transposed, thereby creating simpler tonal relationships. In no. 14 the unfettered metre has been regularized, a feature which has evidently not been felt as a similar disturbance in other places. To no. 9 the composer now attributes a central importance within the framework of the cycle, so that it had to be completely revised (preface, page vi).

In this paper the two versions will be compared at some points, without, however, touching upon the problems of modern *Lied* composition in general.

As may be seen from the table above, most of the songs of the new version are revisions. If in group II/1 things are so simple that the above remarks may suffice, nos. 6 and 10 from group II/2 warrant closer inspection. No. 10, although in principle less radically altered, could not be included in group II/1 because of the piano postlude.

The words of "*Verkündigung über den Hirten*" (no. 6) are the most complicated of the whole cycle from a formal point of view. A glance at its rhyming scheme, however, reveals its poetic language to be formally organized despite its apparent complication. The structure of its contents (nowadays often fashionably labelled *Sinnstruktur* in Germany) is however relatively simple. Four parts are clearly distinguishable: (1) Evocation of the shepherds; (2) Self-description by the angel ("*Seht, ich bin ein neuer, steigender Stern*"); (3) Direct address to the shepherds by the angel ("*Ihr Unerschrockenen*"); and (4) The announcement of wisdom made manifest ("*Doch dieses war . . .*"). The structure in op. 27 does not conform to this simple sequence but is more concentrated. Part I corresponds to p. 28, part II to pp. 29-31, bar 6, part

## Ex. 6b

in die - ser Nacht wird dem Kna - ben die

Mut - ter ge - bo - ren

III to p. 31, bar 7-34, bottom. The transition from the third to the fourth part in this composition is not entirely unambiguous. Although in part two Hindemith acknowledges the contrast between the luminosity of the star and the darkness of the glances riveted on it, yet he joins the themes expressing this contrast together by the same final cadence. On page 34 (top) the composer repeats the first half of the music of part two and of the second half (in the text "*Doch dieses war . . .*") he repeats the somewhat altered final phrase. A shortened repeat of the music of part one continues on the text "*Was ist ein Dörnicht uns . . .*". So the decisive words "*Gott fühlt sich ein in einer Jungfrau Schooss*" come to achieve greatest effect, as the character of part one (representing an evocation) is in the nature of a fanfare. If the formal organization of the *Sinnstruktur* presents itself as a simple sequence, the composition's scheme may be understood roughly as A, B, C, B<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>1</sub>; where parts B<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>1</sub> appear to have been considerably curtailed. In the new version the formal layout is approximately the same, except for the fact that parts B<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>1</sub> appear in motivic preparation. Part one ends differently because it has been transposed a fifth higher and to allow part two to appear in the key of the first version. The principal subject of part two, intoned by the voice, is identical with the first version in the first ten bars, but is subsequently changed, thereby considerably weakening the effect of that section. The "motoric" accompaniment is now replaced by purely chordal support, the bass part of which revels in intervals of the second and in pedal points—so characteristic of the later style of Hindemith.

**Ex. 7**

Seht, ich bin ein neuer steigender Stern.  
 Von hier an sehr bewegt (*J = 84-88*)  
*p sempre staccato*  
 Lebhaft (*J = 100*)  
 Op. 27  
 New version

This part has been extended by motivic interludes, seemingly based on nineteenth-century models.

The middle section is new and totally deprived of the colouristic verve of the original. The melody of the vocal part flows in chromatic or diatonic scale motion, supported by the bass, running in part parallel to it at the distance of an octave.

## Ex. 8a

*pp*  
Ihr Un-er-schrocke-nen, o-wüss-tet ihr, wie-  
*ppp* *cresc.*

## Ex. 8b

Ihr Un-er-schrocke-nen o-wüss-tet ihr, wie-jetzt auf eu-rem schau-en-den Ge-sich-te  
*pp* *mf*

Even if the structure shows only slight traces of interference, the two versions of the song reveal strong discrepancies in character, effected by the change in thematic substance and by the resulting differences in the technique of "motivic" treatment. In "*Pietà*" the poem runs on in simple stanzas. However song-character is not hereby achieved; nor, evidently, is it desired, as the organization of sentences tends to overlap the stanza form. The tasteless text

"O hast du dies gewollt, du hättest nicht durch eines Weibes Leib entspringen dürfen."

(O if you wanted this, you should not have sprung from a woman's womb.)

is separated, musically, at the punctuation sign which is quite feasible. This does not prevent Hindemith from fitting in song-like correlations. Save for quite small variants necessitated by the text (op. 27, bar 12, 14, new version, 6, 14, 17-18), the first two stanzas are musically identical and the fourth stanza conforms to them as far as musical substance goes. Slight changes are unavoidable as the distribution of syllables at the beginning of stanza four does not conform to the pattern of the first two. Formal divergencies do not exist between the two versions; except for the postlude added to the new version—only of importance for the next song which should contain the expressive climax of the whole work. For this reason the composer has diminished the

expressive power of the "improved" composition and simultaneously simplified the singer's part. As to harmony, both the sequence of seconds and the modulatory angle have been modified according to the principles laid down in the *Unterweisung*; on the other hand the declamation has been changed to such a degree that certain peak-notes tend to fall on off-beat syllables. The primordial evocative power of illustration emanating from the music of the first version has been sacrificed at some points,<sup>10</sup> and the melody has been changed in character (beginning of no. 9). In Version I the *tempo* is crotchet = 52-68, i.e. a wide margin of fluctuation has been provided, which seems to indicate that a free rendering is desired. In addition changes of *tempo* are expressly notified, and the expressive *melos* in its progressions, its sevenths, its suspension effects and its free metre reminds one strongly of Schönberg's songs.<sup>11</sup>

**Ex. 9**  
Sehr langsam (♩ : 50-68)  
*mf*

Singst. *mf* O hast du dies ge-wollt -

Klav. *mf*

The vocal part conforms to the intonation of the piano and thereby achieves the greatest intensity of expression. This song repeatedly reveals a technique of sonority in which regular notes of a triad are replaced by their chromatic auxiliaries (*Nebenton*), or the latter are added by a harmonic technique which also recalls Schönberg.

In the new version only remnants of all this have been allowed to stay. The *tempo* has been speeded up (crotchet up to 40) and the two characteristic rising skips of a major seventh in the initial motive are changed into a minor seventh and a major sixth.

**Ex. 10**  
Sehr langsam (♩ bis 40)  
*mf*

Singst. *mf* O hast du dies ge-wollt -

Klav. *mf*

Completely newly composed are "*Mariä Verkündigung*" (no. 3) and "*Geburt Christi*" (no. 7). These two songs represent stylistic borderline cases within

<sup>10</sup> Especially noticeable in no. 3 at the line "... dass sein Blick, und der mit dem sie auf-sah ...", where on the word "auf-sah" (gazed upward) the melody falls steeply downwards in the new version.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the beginning of Schönberg's song "*Herzgewächse*", op. 20.



the framework of the cycle; no. 7 is a model example of complicated bitonality. In any case the composer believes that the instrumental treatment applied to the vocal part in the first version—which has to make do with the same baroque motivic material as the piano—is intolerable to-day (preface, p. vi). The new version substitutes melodic subjects from the first song and thereby adds a musical corollary to the poetic one. At the end motives from no. 11 are also foreshadowed (preface, p. vii).

The third song may now be more closely scrutinized. Its contents can be divided into four parts: (1) as far as the brackets; (2) everything inside the brackets; (3) including verse 20 ("... *nur sie und er*"), and (4) to the end. The exact delimitation of the last two parts is not quite clear; it may seem doubtful whether stanzas 20 and 21 (excluding the final word) should be added to part 3 as its climax, or whether they should be detached from it as a description of earlier events. In 1922/23 Hindemith was evidently unable to put this division clearly into effect; he has shaped this section as a bridge-passage wherein the vocal part uses musical material of part 4 while the instrumental accompaniment still develops motives from part 3. The first part is treated by the composer as a *recitativo accompagnato*, the second one as simple declamation backed by pedal point harmony. Two motives become especially important: a simple triplet motive and the *incipit* of the Christmas chorale "*Vom Himmel hoch*". Part 3 is a dramatic *recitativo* wherein the obstinate rhythm of the accompaniment enhances its general import. As far as harmony is concerned, it seems ruled by bitonality and by a mixture of major and minor based on the same tonic. Only part 2 forms an exception.

Hindemith has strongly criticized this song on p. vii of the preface to the new version. He speaks of "harmonic-tonal restlessness" and of "wearisomely insistent repetition of single motives", finally of "hysterical excitement". The second version has only the form in common with the earlier composition. A longer prelude in 6/8 is intended to introduce "the domestically intimate scene of this announcement". The first part is the counterpart to the prelude, as the same motives are used; the second is again a *recitativo*—even if in strict *tempo*—the third, beginning motorically, replaces (possibly) exaggerated expression with deliberate inexpressiveness combined with faulty declamation (bars 83-84). The climax of the song belongs, surely, to part 3; as the final section represents only a repeat of the prelude. In support of the new version the preface puts forward the argument that "the angel now sings a real melody" (page vi); but that this should have to be the melody with which the "domestically intimate scene" of the beginning has been illustrated seems less convincing than the repeated quotations of the mentioned Lutheran chorale in the first version. (The musical idiom of this song, with its hopeless formalism, is quite generally indicative of the late style of the composer.) This song corresponds in the first version to no. 12 ("*Stillung Mariä mit dem Auferstandenen*") which Hindemith curiously enough has taken over unchanged into version II. Here evidently neither the consequent mixture of major and minor key nor the *recitativo*-like treatment of the vocal part: neither the insistent repetition of motives nor the continuous sequel of dissonances—originating from a

heterophonic treatment of the accompanying melodies in the piano part—has caused him any particular annoyance.

What is the result of having compared both versions? We have noticed how in the first version of the *Marienleben* several *strata* of style tend to overlap. Symptomatically enough Hindemith endeavours to smooth out all extremes. Thereby, in the first place, all rigidly neo-classical passages, whose harmonies are criticized as being arbitrary,<sup>12</sup> have been rooted out. In music of neo-classical bent not only does the harmony appear questionable but also the employment of conventional formulae of melody and of formal patterns. Exactly these, however, have been retained in the new version and even enriched through *clichés* of harmony. By this means neo-classicism seems to me to have excelled itself (if possible) in false positivism. That Hindemith finds himself with these neo-classic tendencies in sudden proximity to Puccini, especially in his version for orchestra, is not further surprising (new version, no. 7, bars 57 ff.). Yet also the spontaneous expression, existent in the first version, has been modified.

Hindemith has retreated to the middle way of least resistance. His renunciation of any radical spirit speaks clearly through his more recent compositions and is pressed into a direct formula in the final section of the preface to the new version of the *Marienleben* as well as in his Schönberg-analysis in the *Unterweisung*.<sup>13</sup> This continuous increase in animosity against any differentiated modernity of style could not but influence his own compositions, and so it may be time to query the technical mastery of Hindemith which is receiving so lavish praise nowadays. Technical skill in disposing musical material does not alone constitute mastery, as it is by necessity a replica of those works of the past on which it has been modelled. To remain within the limits of the achieved leads immediately to falsification and in this sense there has never really existed any such "*Ars antiqua*" as seems to be Hindemith's evident goal. It is therefore not surprising to find in the new version of the *Marienleben* sections which are simply badly composed (cf. Ex. 8b, the whole of no. 3, especially bars 71-87 ff.). These sections represent nothing but their own "jargon" which is made to stand for itself without any higher artistic intention. To this may be added the inconsistencies of the new version. How is it possible that the composer can tolerate a certain feature of style in one song, whereas he feels compelled to criticize it in another; as for instance the instrumental treatment of the vocal part which annoys him in nos. 6 and 7 of op. 27, but which he retains unaltered in no. 14 of version II? How is it that no. 12—although it cannot boast of either an exemplary "harmonic bent" or of being a model sequence of harmonic gradations—could have been retained

<sup>12</sup> In the first edition of Hindemith's *Unterweisung* one finds on page 251 ff. a list of his compositions in which "the realization" of the composer's opinions on the technique of composition—as expressed in the book—may be studied. This list contains, in chronological order, the *opus* numbers: 11/1-4, 22, 23/2, 24/2, 25/1, 2, 3, 44/4, 45/1, 49, 50, the oratorio *Das Unaufhörliche*, etc. Evidently the strictly neo-classical works—characterized above—are missing here. On page 252 Hindemith defines the new version of the *Marienleben* "as the practical elucidation of his theories".

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Unterweisung*, new ed., 1940, p. 254.

unchanged? Not even the historic importance of the first version can be approached by the new one. The somewhat motley style of op. 27 may have been more unified, but at the expense of spontaneity. In place of spontaneity one is now faced with the concoctions of an unstable theory and with a handful of practical formulae which are used by Hindemith and his imitators within the confines of respectable academicism. Yet Hindemith himself proved again and again, in former years, that it is possible to compose new music of great artistic value.

*(Translated by Hans F. Redlich.)*

## Hindemith and Nature

BY

NORMAN CAZDEN

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By entering into problems of the theory of music, the composer Hindemith sets forth also certain attitudes towards the philosophy of his art. We are tempted in all charity to make a clear separation between Hindemith's various activities, on the reasonable ground that a good composer may be a poor theorist, while a brilliant theorist may show little talent as a composer. But Hindemith's just renown as a composer brings about a widespread influence and consideration of his views, and his words of wisdom or error alike are taken most seriously. Thus he bears a heavy responsibility for sound thinking, and if his statements and explanations are poorly founded, backed as they are by his personal prestige, he is in a position to cause much mischief to the understanding of music.

Few manuals of recent times enter into fundamental questions of music theory, and often one must deduce the implied axioms. Of theories deserving the name, we may distinguish three main types: those claiming to be founded on the laws of Nature, those claiming the priority of the arbitrary instinct of the composer, and those which rely on the observed practice of the art of music. We may term these the natural, the subjective and the empirical theories, and suggest that none of them fully satisfy our requirements. Hindemith belongs to the Nature group, though he is constantly forced to fall back on subjective decisions and on appeals to usage.

The theories of music based on the "law of Nature" are supposed to derive from objective *data* that can be stated in very exact mathematical terms and demonstrated in rigorous experimental form. Thereby they present laws which are held to be universally and eternally valid, and Hindemith can declare that "all tonal phenomena are based on inescapable facts".<sup>1</sup>

The true theory of music, as Hindemith reminds us, must be general enough to comprise the permanent and inevitable aspects of the art, and should not merely register the practices in vogue at a given time. And these permanent aspects can only reside in the natural properties of tones and of their connections. "In the domain of tonal relations no expansion or innovation is possible, no questions of style are applicable, and there can be no progress, any more than there can be in the multiplication table or the simplest laws of

<sup>1</sup> Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition* (1937). Translated by Arthur Mendel. 2 vols., New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1942. Notations that follow are all from vol. I, referred to simply by the title *Craft*, and are taken from the Revised Edition of 1945. Where elucidation of the text from the German original appears, it is taken from the revised and extended German edition, *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*, Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1940, and identified as *Unterweisung*.

*Craft*, p. 45. *Unterweisung*, p. 64.

mechanics".<sup>2</sup> This is why Hindemith aligns himself on the side of Nature as the true law-giver of musical art.

Now musicians usually hesitate to question this kind of Nature theory of music, and for three good reasons. First, it is very unpopular to oppose the pronouncements of science, even those that may be faulty. Second, few musicians to-day have enough grasp of the relevant acoustical principles and their mathematical formulations to discover the errors that may lie concealed in these technicalities. And finally, musicians are not generally aware that the "law of Nature" doctrines, from Pythagoras to our day, while cast in a seeming scientific guise, do not result from or lead to a scientific approach to music or to Nature at all. These doctrines represent in reality a species of mysticism dealing with magic numbers. In their current forms, the Nature theories represent a retreat to mediaeval, pre-scientific modes of speculation and not a proper philosophy and method of science.

Among such doctrines, Hindemith's dealings with Nature appear less informed than some, less cautious and also less modest than many, about as inaccurate and as contradictory as most, and more dogmatic and fallacious than we have any reason to tolerate. It is high time that we cease to regard as a final or a useful explanation of Nature in music an analysis that in extended discussion does not properly distinguish between Just Intonation and Pythagorean, and which regularly misuses the term *overtone* to mean *harmonic partial*.

To Hindemith, Nature has a powerful and inexorable control over tonal relations. "Tonal relations are founded in Nature", he writes,<sup>3</sup> "in the characteristics of sounding materials and of the ear, as well as in the pure relations of abstract numerical groups. We cannot escape the relationship of tones". Yet to say loosely that Tonality is a "natural force" because "gravitation itself . . . draws the tones towards their roots"<sup>4</sup> may make for good poetry, but as a description of Nature it is not very precise.

Hindemith offers us truly basic "principles of composition, derived from the natural characteristics of tones, and consequently valid for all periods".<sup>5</sup> His new technique claims "the firm foundation of the laws of nature", and enables us to overcome the "obstinacy" of tones. As an impartial investigator, Hindemith begins "as if we had to provide the material for the musician to work with, unguided by previous experience". Thus he will free us from the musicians' ties to "traditional thinking" and "personal preferences".<sup>6</sup>

Let us examine, therefore, exactly how profound is Hindemith's knowledge of the tones and "the forces that reside in them", and judge whether his leading is as "free from aesthetic dogma" and from "stylistic rigidity" as he claims.

<sup>2</sup> Craft, p. 55. "Auf dem Gebiete der Tonverwandtschaften lässt sich nichts erweitern und erneuern. Hier gibt es keine Stilfragen und keinen Fortschritt, so wenig wie es im Einmaleins Stilfragen und in den einfachsten Gesetzen der Mechanik einen Fortschritt geben kann." *Unterweisung*, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Craft, p. 152. *Unterweisung*, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*. "... dass es die Anziehungskraft selbst ist, die den Klang zum Grundton und zur Bassstimme herabzieht".

<sup>5</sup> Craft, p. 9. *Unterweisung*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Hindemith. *A Composer's World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952, pp. 67-68.

Does Nature provide us with relations among tones as they occur in music, or are these the products of human artifice? The concept that the natural potentials of tone act as a *limiting condition* of the art of music, but not as a *determining cause* of musical relations, seems foreign to Hindemith's experience with the philosophy of science. Certainly, if tones or intervals did not exist, or if we could not perceive them, the art of music would not be possible. But the fact of their existence by no means produces any particular feature of the art. For art is not an activity of Nature, it is an activity of people. And in bending raw tones to artistic purposes, people impose upon them systems of relations which are founded in the history of music and not in Nature.

While Hindemith wavers on the question of the initial organization of tones,<sup>7</sup> its significance can hardly be overstated. For if we, and not Nature, create order among tones, then we can hardly avoid doing so under the influence of those very "stylistic prejudices" of which Hindemith complains, and we can never hope to achieve a pure and generalized theory. But if it is Nature which has ordained how tones shall be related, how is it that this ordering is by no means the same in different historical periods and in different culture areas?

Hindemith's analysis begins with the familiar harmonic series of overtones from the fundamental C. But he fails to remind us that he discusses theoretical rather than actual overtones. Despite many tales about the marvels of harmonics, it is not true that every musical tone is accompanied by "an immutable series". Real overtones differ in intensity, and not according to a gradual decrease as assumed in abstract theories, but according to real conditions of tone production. Because of the specific resonance characteristics of a given instrument or voice sounding in a given space, certain overtones are amplified to appreciable proportions of the total intensity of a tone, and others are suppressed, or rather brought below the threshold of auditory masking. Thus many theoretical overtones are entirely absent in perception, yet partials high in the series may be prominent, and many *inharmonic* partials are also usually present, for these are just as natural as any other.

Thus, in spite of the theoretical series, it is not self-evident that the harmonic series actually contains even the fabled six partials called on to justify the extended major triad or "chord of Nature". In a real sounding tone, say of a clarinet playing *mezzo-forte* in a low register, partials 2, 4 and 6 are quite inaudible, but partials 7 and 9 are by no means negligible. Therefore the major triad would not appear, but certain very unpleasant problems would. Lacking the necessary guidance of Nature, our poor clarinetist would never even meet with the octave relation.

But if the real overtones are not to be as important as the ideal and total series, then the difficulties are immeasurably worse. For this ideal series

<sup>7</sup> "We find the intervals embedded in the tonal raw material which Nature has made ready for musical use, consisting of an infinite number (*unzählbare Menge*) of tones, from the deepest barely perceptible drone to the whistle that lies at the other limit of audibility. Into this inchoate tonal mass we can introduce a certain order by the use of the immutable measures of the octave and the fifth. Nature, in fact, has herself introduced this order (*Die Natur nimmt diese Einteilung selbst vor*), and put at our disposal a whole series of other intervals as well." *Craft*, p. 15. *Unterweisung*, p. 32.



extends to infinity, so that we can "discover" and "prove" in it the natural origin of any musical relations whatever, not to mention all the unmusical ones; though even here we have a crying exception in the minor triad. And without going very far, Hindemith's reasonings from this ideal series come to grief, so that he must first avow his everlasting devotion to Nature, and at once abandon her. Her favoured chord is still "one of the most impressive phenomena of nature, simple and elemental as rain, snow and wind. Music, as long as it exists, will always take its departure from the major triad and return to it. . . . In the world of tones, the triad corresponds to the force of gravity".<sup>8</sup> Yet "the overtone series in its raw state is not usable for musical purposes, on account of the constantly decreasing distance between its adjacent tones".<sup>9</sup> Our suspicion of such arguments is increased the moment we ask whether musicians of the much older cultures of India or of Bali, or even Hindemith's Turkish friends, are likely to put aside their lyrical arts and turn to the Just major triad instead.

What happens when we go beyond the sixth partial? On the testimony of the resounding overtones, Hindemith can have no quarrel with the obscure cultist Wischnegradsky,<sup>10</sup> who claims that the quarter-tone scale is the most natural of all because it is implied by the eleventh partial. With these higher partials, indeed, Nature seems to go on a rampage, and all reasonableness has left her. "One will find a series of relationships wholly at odds with the experience of musical practice", complains Hindemith. We have to "interrupt the process of following the overtone series directly upwards . . . and for the derivation of the remaining tones from a single overtone series, in anything like the order that corresponds to practical musical experience, no rule can be found".<sup>11</sup> Alas, not only is Nature left stranded, but if we read our theorist closely, we cannot help feeling that a crucial choice has been made, and that the fountainhead of the art of music is no longer bountiful Nature, but the *experience of the art of music*, on account of which Hindemith rejects the harmonic series with its immutable law of gravitation and its "electronic flux" out of hand. "The higher prime-numbered members of the series and their multiples do not fit our tonal system. They are either too flat or too sharp. . . . The natural tones of the overtone series cannot of course be 'too sharp' or 'too flat' in themselves. It is just that our tonal system, which strives to bring incomprehensible multiplicity within our grasp, cannot find any simple and clear place for them".<sup>12</sup> Thus, surreptitiously, Hindemith relinquishes his command of the timeless harmony of the spheres and confesses to a lowly, empirical standard. Practical considerations decide which of his

<sup>8</sup> Craft, p. 22. ". . . eine der grossartigsten Naturerscheinungen; einfach und überwältigend wie der Regen, das Eis, der Wind. So lange es eine Musik gibt, wird sie immer von diesem reinsten und natürlichsten aller Klänge ausgehen und in ihm sich auflösen müssen. . . . Der Erdanziehung entspricht im Gebäude der Töne der Dreiklang". *Unterweisung*, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Craft, p. 24. *Unterweisung*, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> Ivan Wischnegradsky, *Manuel d'harmonie à quarts de ton*. Paris: La Sirène Musicale, 1933, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Craft, pp. 55-56. *Unterweisung*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>12</sup> Craft, p. 24. ". . . Unser Tonsystem, das die unerfassliche Mannigfalt fassbar machen soll, kann sie lediglich nicht in seiner Folge einfacher und übersichtlicher Masse unterbringen". *Unterweisung*, p. 41.

beloved Nature's overtones he shall allow in the house and which he shall declare illegitimate.

If Hindemith had merely repeated the widespread theoretical fallacies of derivations from the fertile harmonics, his position would hardly deserve our critical note at this time. But when he ventures into the further natural phenomena of combination-tones, he enters upon new and significant errors of scientific fact and reasoning.

The difference-tone theory of roots originated with Tartini,<sup>13</sup> but it seems probable that Hindemith's notions stem from the speculations of the more academic German system-builder, Felix Krueger.<sup>14</sup> Hindemith is lax in offering us his experimental proofs,<sup>15</sup> and we cannot tell why he has ignored the demolition of Krueger's views by the far more reliable Carl Stumpf.<sup>16</sup> We mention these things because Hindemith has been grossly misled by the errors of others, which he took to be original, merely because he did not really go to Nature for her secrets. His "learning" amounted to taking over a few partial but impressive assertions that he supposed would fit in with the pre-conceptions nurtured in that somewhat confined *Kinderstube*, the German conservatory of his day. This is not the road to the ultimate understanding of the natural properties of tones for which Hindemith calls, and we might well grant him the amateur standing he invokes,<sup>17</sup> if he did not repeatedly announce his discovery of the inalterable laws of musical gravity.

Hindemith is not interested in real combination-tones at all, but only in fictitious ones, though even these give him endless trouble. Declaring without qualification that any two simultaneous tones produce combination-tones,<sup>18</sup> Hindemith finds that "they usually are so weak that the superficial ear does not perceive them, but this makes them all the more important for the subconscious ear. They are the third point of a triangle whose other two points are in the sounding interval, making possible for the ear a sort of trigonometry by which it is enabled to form a judgment of the purity of an interval".<sup>19</sup> So Hindemith is not dealing with combination-tones that exist, but only with those present to the "subconscious ear". In fact, their non-existence seems to make them all the more "important" to the subconscious. This is how mathematical-sounding talk about triangles and trigonometries covers up a substitution of phantoms for facts and of pure metaphysics for science.

<sup>13</sup> Giuseppe Tartini. *Trattato di musica secondo la vera scienza dell' armonia*. Padova, 1754. See also: John Stillingfleet (Hawkins). *Principles and Power of Harmony*. London, 1771.

<sup>14</sup> "Differenztöne und Konsonanz", *Archiv für die Gesamte Psychologie*, Bd. 1, 1903, 205-275; Bd. 2, 1904, 1-80. "Beobachten über Zweiklänge", *Philosophische Studien (Wundts)*, Bd. 16, 1900, 307-379 and 568-663. "Die Theorie der Konsonanz", *Psychologische Studien (Wundts)*, Bd. 1, 1906, 305-387; Bd. 2, 1906, 205-255; Bd. 4, 1908, 201-282; Bd. 5, 1910, 294-411.

<sup>15</sup> But see *Unterweisung*, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> Carl Stumpf. "Differenztöne und Konsonanz". *Beiträge zur Akustik und Musikwissenschaft*, Heft 4, 1909, 90-104.

<sup>17</sup> *Composer's World*, p. vii.

<sup>18</sup> *Composer's World*, p. 73.

<sup>19</sup> *Craft*, p. 58. "Sie klingen meist so schwach, dass sie dem oberflächlichen Gehör entgehen. Umso wichtiger sind sie für das unbewusste Hören. Sie sind der trigonometrische Punkt ausserhalb des klingenden Intervalls, mit dessen Hilfe das Ohr eine Art Dreiecksmessung vollzieht und dadurch ein Urteil über den Reinheitsgrad des Intervalls erhält." *Unterweisung*, p. 81.

Combination-tones are produced in the ear due to its non-linear response to sound intensities beyond a certain threshold. They are of considerably less prominence than is suggested by the concept of a "natural root" of a musical interval, and the intensity of the primary tones is critical in the situation.

There are in fact two kinds of combination-tones, called difference-tones and summation-tones. Difference-tones, which Hindemith dubs simply "combination tones" (*Kombinationstöne*), are heard as the pitch-equivalents of the differences between the frequencies of the primary tones, or between multiples of their frequencies. Thus in our Ex. 1 the first-order difference-tone  $D_1$  is

**Ex. 1**

[Hindemith] "Combination tones"	Combination Tones [Stevens & Davis]	
	Difference tones	Summation tones
$C_1$ — ■	$D_1$ — ■	$S_1$ — ■
$C_2$ — ◆	$D_2$ — ▲	$S_2$ — ▲
	$D_3$ — ◆	$S_3$ — ◆

Calculated root → Discrepancy in Intonation ×

The musical score consists of four staves, labeled A, B, C, and D. Staff A is labeled [Hindemith] and shows a sequence of notes and rests. Staff B is labeled [85db] and includes circled numbers 5, 4, m3, m6, m3, m6, 12, 11, and m10. Staff C is labeled [50db] and shows notes with 'x' marks above them. Staff D is labeled [67db] and shows notes with 'x' marks above them. The score is divided into two sections by a vertical line, with the first section labeled 'Calculated root' and the second section labeled 'Discrepancy in Intonation ×'.

shown as the difference between the frequencies of the two primary tones, the same as Hindemith's "first-order combination-tone" shown as  $C_1$ . A second-order difference-tone  $D_2$ , which Hindemith entirely ignores, is heard as the difference between twice the frequency of the upper primary and the frequency of the lower primary. The third-order difference-tone  $D_3$  is the difference between twice the frequency of the lower primary and the frequency of the upper primary, and this turns out by a coincidence of calculations to be the same as Hindemith's "combination tone of the second order",  $C_2$ , though his derivation is incorrect.

Besides the difference-tones, there are three significant orders of summation-tones, shown in our example as  $S_1$ ,  $S_2$  and  $S_3$ . These are the pitch-equivalents

of the sums of the frequencies of the primary tones, or sums of multiples of these frequencies. For correct definition of the order numbers, the rule is "the number of the highest harmonic entering into the combination".<sup>30</sup>

Hindemith's rules for deriving interval roots from combination-tones are as follow:

- (1) Any sounding interval gives rise to the combination-tones C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub> as shown in Ex. 1-A (*Craft*, pp. 58-59; *Composer's World*, pp. 73-74).
- (2) Combination-tones other than C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub> can be said to exist, but they can be ignored, because (a) "they are hardly perceptible even to the fine discriminations of the inner ear (of which we are not conscious)" and (b) so long as the primaries are in simple ratios, "nothing is produced but octave doublings of earlier orders of combination tones" (*Craft*, p. 64).
- (3) "In certain cases", unspecified, the combination-tones C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub> are as strong as or even stronger than the primary tones (*Craft*, p. 59).
- (4) C<sub>1</sub> is significantly louder than C<sub>2</sub> (*Craft*, p. 67).
- (5) Lower tones, presumably whether primary or combination-tones, have greater weight ("klangliches Gewicht") than higher ones, due to the "weight of the vibrating material—the air masses" (*Craft*, p. 67).
- (6) In case C<sub>1</sub> does not coincide with the lowest sounding tone, that is, when rules 4 and 5 conflict, the lowest sounding tone is still to be taken for the interval root. However, the conflict results in a "clouding" or "burdening" of the interval in question, which makes its rating inferior. Hence the m<sub>6</sub> is inferior to the M<sub>3</sub> (*Craft*, p. 67).
- (7) Lack of coincidence of C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>, even if these are an octave apart, explains why the 4th, let us say, is inferior to the fifth (*Craft*, p. 65).
- (8) No combination-tone can be higher than the upper primary tone of an interval (*Composer's World*, p. 73).

Having set up these rules, we find that Hindemith's own derivations of interval roots conflict with them in far too many instances, thus:

- (1) By rule 7, if the 4th is inferior to the 5th, then the 12th is even worse, since the lower "root" source happens to be the "weaker" (by rule 4) C<sub>2</sub>.
- (2) By rule 6, Hindemith declares the m<sub>6</sub> inferior to the M<sub>3</sub>, but clearly for the same reason the M<sub>10</sub> should also be inferior.
- (3) For the m<sub>3</sub> and the M<sub>6</sub>, the rules plainly indicate that the root should be *A flat*. Hindemith's insistence on *C* as the "theoretical root" nevertheless, is frankly declared to depend entirely upon *practice*, and it is at once proclaimed that this discrepancy is *not* a defect in the scheme of analysis.
- (4) For the major second, not shown in our example, Hindemith requires that we reverse the indicated root-tone, so that *D* becomes the root of the second *c'-d'*. Here again the change is due to "practical considerations", namely "our familiarity with the dominant-seventh chord". Furthermore, in order to consummate this violation of his own rules Hindemith employs the dreaded 7th partial, despite its previous banishment from the domain of music, and despite the ready availability of the "proper" interval root *C* in the common ratio 8 : 9 of the interval (*Craft*, pp. 80-81).

It should be obvious that as soon as Hindemith gets into difficulties with his drawing of interval roots from his declared natural sources, which nobody

<sup>30</sup> Stanley S. Stevens and Hallowell Davis. *Hearing*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1938, p. 198.

required him to make so intricate, he abandons troublesome Nature to her fate and takes refuge in empirical procedures, in expediency, and in custom, to account for his results. We do not by any means begrudge Hindemith his discovery that, in traditional practice, the major and minor thirds from  $c$  are both normally perceived as having the harmonic root  $c$ . But for this showing we need not be indebted to any such strained theory. If the "feeling for interval roots is innate" and dependent upon certain combination-tones, even if these are only imaginary trigonometric projections and do not work, "usual practice", "habitual point of view" and opportunistic "advantage" are the criteria when the issue must be faced. In terms of his own stated axioms, Hindemith's derivations of interval roots from combination-tones, and his consequent classifications of "pure" and "inferior" intervals, do not hold good in a single instance.

Moreover, we are not so easily rid of Nature. Granting these inconsistencies, we may still ask, how valid are Hindemith's rules? Let us compare the root-derivation principles with what is known about *real* combination-tones.

- (1) Hindemith's rule 1 is flatly false. Since they result from a specific response of the ear to certain intensity levels, there can be no "subconscious" combination-tones. No real ones are heard until an interval is sounded at about 42 db above threshold, and then they are so faint as to be barely distinguishable. Hence, as shown in example 1-B, either the intervals at 35 db would have no roots at all, or their roots would be identical with their lower tones, since by Hindemith's rule 5 these would be the stronger. Such "roots" would remain meaningless verbalisms by any theory, including Hindemith's.
- (2) Hindemith's rule 2 is incorrect in two respects: (a) combination-tones other than  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  (actually  $D_1$  and  $D_3$ ) are by no means insignificant, specifically for primaries sounded at higher than 60 db; and (b), save for the octave and fifth, they are *not* octave doublings of "lower orders of combination tones", specifically of  $C_1$  and  $C_2$ .
- (3) Hindemith's rule 3 is invalid, and results from a confusion between "beat tones" and difference tones, and also from a confusion with phenomena peculiar to the fusion of pure tones. With real musical tones as primaries, combination-tones do not become really important until about 62 db, and they never rise to more than about 25 db below stimulus level. Once again, therefore, the "strongest" tone of each combination in Ex. 1-B would be, by Hindemith's rule 5, the only possible true root of the interval.
- (4) Between about 71 db and 95 db for the primary tones, the difference-tone  $D_3$  (Hindemith's  $C_2$ ) is quite definitely stronger than  $D_1$  (Hindemith's  $C_1$ ), though it is not the strongest of the combination-tones at any time. Therefore, by Hindemith's rule 4, presuming this to relate to facts and not to fiction, the true interval roots thus derived would have to shift accordingly, and by rule 6, the  $m_6$  would become purer than the  $M_3$ .
- (5) While the perceptual phenomenon *tonal volume* is familiar to psychologists in a form somewhat comparable to Hindemith's rule 5, and while it is acceptable as a partial if inadequate description of auditory masking, nowhere is masking attributed to differentials of physical "weight" of either the vibrating material or the transmitting medium. The concept is ridiculous on its face; no "weight" differential is found for slow or fast vibration of the air. Perhaps Hindemith's informant on this matter was weighing philosophical profundities.
- (6) At a level of 50 db for the primaries, only  $D_1$  and  $S_1$  have any significant values. Hence, as shown in Ex. 1-C, the  $m_6$  would have a very curious "root", just the



one Hindemith sought to exclude by his rule 5. The  $m_3$  and  $M_6$  continue their usual difficulties. The 12th acquires an internal root, the 11th a wholly unexpected one, and the  $M_{10}$  gets the same poor root as the  $m_6$ . However, if Hindemith should adduce the somewhat weaker but still detectable  $S_1$  as contributing to the determination of interval roots, we would arrive at even more distressing results, for only the 12th would have a credible root.

- (7) If Hindemith's rule 6 were at all valid in principle, that is, if the real relative loudness of tones and/or resultants (combination-tones) were the determining element in deriving an interval root, then the entire matter becomes clearly specious the moment we examine the actual loudness levels. If the primary tones of the interval are equally loud, then by Hindemith's rule 5 the lower tone of the interval would invariably be its root, since no combination-tone will ever exceed it. But if we were to allow for different loudness levels for the two primaries, which surely happens constantly under the conditions of real, sounding music, then the interval root must be whichever constituent is louder. We forbear to go into the question of where Hindemith would seek the "natural root" of an interval that was merely imagined but not sounded, something the composer is doing constantly.
- (8) At a level of 67 db or so for the primaries we arrive at the full potentials of the combination-tone premise which Hindemith hides from view. In terms of relative prominence, experimental evidence is quite definite. At least six combination-tones appear, as shown in Ex. 1-D.  $D_2$ , not even mentioned by Hindemith, is by all odds the strongest combination tone of all, and consistently so. Slightly weaker, but still better than Hindemith's favourites, is  $S_2$ , the second-order summation-tone. This last fact is especially disturbing to the sensibilities of the theorist because, except for the 5th and the  $M_{10}$ , this  $S_2$  invariably turns out to be the equivalent of an "out-of-tune" partial, that is, the 7th, 11th, 14th, 17th, 19th and 21st partials, all of which Hindemith has expressly removed from musical consideration on suspicious but "natural" grounds. In the cases of the  $m_3$  and  $M_6$ , even the prominent  $D_2$  is a "harmonic seventh" partial, and yet by Hindemith's rule 6 would be the true root of the intervals.
- (9) As to Hindemith's rule 8, not only is it incorrect, as shown in Ex. 1-D, but all the common intervals *except the "inferior" 4th* would have as their best root a combination-tone higher than both primary tones of the interval.

(References: Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, art. "Combination-tones"; Stevens and Davis, *Hearing*, pp. 197 ff.)

If our common intervals in Ex. 1-D appear "cloudy" and "burdensome" in Hindemith's terms, they are by no means so troublesome as the theoretical pitfalls set for us by Nature. If "interval roots" result from real combination-tones, then the root-source of the minor sixth  $e'-c''$ , by Hindemith's announced principles, cannot be  $c$ . At 35 db it should be designated as  $e'$ ; at 50 db, as  $g$ ; and at 67 db and higher as about a quarter-tone below  $f\sharp''$ . And unless we rely on special insights and definitions not accessible to ordinary mortals, we end by showing that all musical intervals are positively horrendous and ought never to be sounded at all.

Hindemith derives the musical scale from "Nature" as a 12-tone scale, which he uncritically identifies with the chromatic scale. The claim is made, "I shall simply follow the suggestions which to the understanding ear lie hidden in the overtone series, and shall thus arrive at a simple and natural construction of the scale".<sup>21</sup> But since many stubborn overtones "do not fit into our tonal

<sup>21</sup> Craft, p. 70. *Unterweisung*, pp. 92-93.



system",<sup>22</sup> and the general theory thus "cannot find any simple and clear place for them", Hindemith decides for us what portion of Nature shall "suffice" for a "complete solution of the problem—at least for harmonic purposes".<sup>23</sup> We can only wonder why Hindemith complains about older "derivations" of scales from overtone ratios, on the ground that "one is simply taking the scale already present in practical music and trying to explain the intervals of the series, which have already demonstrated their usefulness".<sup>24</sup>

Hindemith's "primeval method" (*ursprüngliche Zeugung*) has nothing to do with the real history of scale forms. However music began, at least on this earth, it did not begin with the contemplation of a single tone, nor did it "grope" its way through the sublime overtones until Hindemith cried halt at

Ex. 2

Ex. 2 consists of four staves of musical notation. Staff 'a' shows a scale in G major (G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5) with notes numbered 1 through 6. Staff 'b' shows the overtone series for G4, with notes labeled (1) through (7a). A label 'coincident overtone' points to the G5 overtone. Staff 'c' continues the overtone series with notes labeled (7b) through (12). Staff 'd' shows a scale in G minor (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5) with notes numbered 1 through 6. A label '2a' points to the G5 overtone.

<sup>22</sup> Craft, p. 24. *Unterweisung*, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> Craft, pp. 50-51. *Unterweisung*, p. 70.

<sup>24</sup> Craft, p. 33. "Hier geht man von einem in der praktischen Musik schon vorhandenen Modell einer Tonleiter aus und sucht in die Leiterintervalle, sich durch die Erfahrung als brauchbar erweisen haben, nachträglich zu begründen." *Unterweisung*, p. 51.

the seventh step.<sup>25</sup> It is from such speculative axioms, and not from the natural facts we were promised, that Hindemith spins his elaborate involutions in order to extract his 12-tone scale.<sup>26</sup> An examination of Ex. 2 shows his procedure (*Craft*, pp. 32-52).

- (1) A 12-tone scale arises from a single generator or "parent-tone", shown in Ex. 2-a.
- (2) The scale grows from the natural harmonic partials 1-6 of this generator.
- (3) It is not the harmonic partials themselves which enter into the scale, but their further resultants when each is re-interpreted as an overtone of another generator. Thus, in Ex. 2-b, the scale degree *E flat* (4a) has as its fifth partial *g'*, which in turn is the sixth partial of the generator *C*. Therefore we are said to hear the *E flat* as a derivative of *C*, because whenever we hear the *C*, we automatically and unconsciously select from it the partial *g'*, and at once recognize that this same *g'* might also have arisen out of an *E flat*, thereby learning where *E flat* is. Similarly, we become aware of *E* in the scale because its fourth partial, *e'*, is also the fifth partial of the generator *C*.
- (4) The scale degrees (4a), (5), (6), (8) and (10a) in Ex. 2-b are thus obtained by a simple division of one of the overtones of the generator. But only a few degrees of the 12-tone scale may be obtained by this process, particularly because we may not divide any partial higher than the sixth.
- (5) In order to obtain additional tones, it is necessary to proceed by a kind of second-order derivation, employing two or even three stages of alternating multiplication and division. Two stages are needed for scale degrees (2), (3), (11) and (12), and three stages for degrees (7a) and (7b). Essentially the theory declares, therefore, that whenever we hear an *F#* in the scale from *C*, subconsciously we say to ourselves: the third partial *g* of the generator *C* is also a second partial of *G*; the third partial *d'* of this *G* is also a fourth partial of *D*; and the fifth partial *f#* of this *D* is also a fourth partial of *F#*; therefore we hear *F#* in relation to the generator *C*.

Perhaps this procedure is "simple" or "natural" because we never become aware of it, but the permutations and factorings of the numbers 1 to 6 might better be devoted to the calculation of non-colliding paths for electric trains. Let us see if Hindemith has fathomed his own mathematics. Procedure 3 is essentially an arithmetical operation. First we multiply the frequency of a fundamental to obtain a harmonic overtone, then we divide the frequency of that overtone to locate a resultant scale degree. Our premise depends then on a *coincidence of overtones*. It is an elaborate way of saying that two musical tones are related if they have the same overtone. All the more curious, therefore, is Hindemith's refusal elsewhere to allow derivations by any such principle.

Ex. 2-d shows a "natural" derivation of the minor harmony in terms of "coincident overtones". The major triad is "justified" because its tones are said to have a common fundamental, while the tones of the minor are shown to have a common overtone. This explanation Hindemith regards as

<sup>25</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>26</sup> "To arrive at each new tone of the scale, divide the vibration number of each overtone successively by the order-numbers of the preceding tones in the series." *Craft*, p. 34. *Unterweisung*, p. 52.

far-fetched and basically in error,<sup>27</sup> yet it is just the means he has used to derive the scale.

What of Hindemith's rule 5, which he assures us is "no arbitrary procedure"?<sup>28</sup> If we accept the indirect derivations in Ex. 2-b, then we must also take account of certain additional tones, as in Ex. 2-c. We thus arrive at a new version of the tone *A* (Ex. 10b) by a three-fold derivation, and a new *E flat* is similarly obtained (Ex. 4b). Moreover, the resulting intonation of the *A* of 10b is a syntonic comma ( $81/80$  or 21 cents) higher than the *A* of 10a, and the *E flat* of 4b is a syntonic comma below the *E flat* of 4a. Since Hindemith agrees that this comma is a noteworthy discrepancy,<sup>29</sup> surely we ought to include these resultants in our scale, lest we slight one of Nature's own. Our theorist's thoughts are not with Nature when he objects that such tones "would destroy the purity of our scale".<sup>30</sup>

Ex. 2-e shows another speculative origin of the minor triad in a theoretical "undertone" series, familiar from the "dualistic" doctrine of Oettingen.<sup>31</sup> Hindemith regards this as interesting but most far-fetched<sup>32</sup> because there is no evidence that an inverted overtone series exists.<sup>33</sup> But Hindemith's presumed generators of the scale do not exist in fact, any more than do "undertones". To obtain *D flat*, (2) in Ex. 2-b, we are not given natural facts of hearing, but are told that we infer it as an imaginary fundamental supplied to a physically non-existent *f'*, which in turn is a theoretical (but not actually sounding) overtone of another imaginary fundamental *F* again supplied to a theoretical (and this time possible) overtone *c'* of the generator *C*, which we assume for the sake of our "harmonic sense" is not actually sounding along with the *D flat*.

Though it has also been derived from overtones and such, Hindemith has no patience with a "natural" diatonic scale. First, he complains, it is old and outmoded in practice,<sup>34</sup> but this is dressing up a "natural" theory to fit the facts. Second, it is complicated and unclear, requiring second-order or indirect derivations of the chromatic degrees.<sup>35</sup> But in Hindemith's 12-tone scale also, all flat and sharp tones, and even some diatonic degrees, are obtained indirectly, even at third hand. Again, the diatonic scale is contained in the 12-tone scale, which is therefore more general and complete. But other scales have been constructed which also contain the diatonic, such as the 19-tone

<sup>27</sup> "The basic error of this explanation is, however, that it reckons with actual tonal relations which are no sooner cited in the case of one triad than they are disregarded in the case of the other." Craft, pp. 77-78. *Unterweisung*, p. 100. Compare Hindemith's dealings with coincident overtones!

<sup>28</sup> Craft, p. 35. "Man wird nicht behaupten wollen, dies sei ein willkürliches Vorgehen." *Unterweisung*, p. 53.

<sup>29</sup> *Composer's World*, p. 71.

<sup>30</sup> Craft, p. 42. "... sie zerstören deren Reinheit. . . . Unsere Tonleiter ist überdies vollständig, wir brauchen keine weiteren Töne mehr". *Unterweisung*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Oettingen. *Das Duale Harmoniesystem*. Leipzig: C. F. W. Siegel, 1913.

<sup>32</sup> Craft, p. 77.

<sup>33</sup> "It seems to me repugnant to good sense to assume a force capable of producing such an inversion. . . . There is no evidence of the operation of such a force." Craft, p. 78. *Unterweisung*, p. 100.

<sup>34</sup> Craft, p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> Craft, p. 48.

scale and the quarter-tone scale, and these are not therefore better. Fourth, the diatonic scale is said to be dull and monotonous, instead of multi-coloured. But it is precisely their dependence upon the diatonic degrees that renders the chromatics "colourful", and these qualities disappear if the chromatics are no longer taken as inflections of primary diatonic tones. Finally, the diatonic scale is said not to exhaust the overtone series, and this we may regard as a blessing, since that series is so extensive that Hindemith also has had to exclude many of its disturbing but "natural" properties.

The first point, practice, is the really significant answer to Hindemith's requirement that Nature produce for him a 12-tone scale: he wishes to use such a scale, and the rest is rationalization. We can gather this from his complaints about the pentatonic scale. This scale is admittedly also "natural", but, (1) it is confined, (2) it has no skips of major thirds, (3) it results in monotonous and inflexible harmony and in cool, undifferentiated and remote melodies, and (4) it is used largely in eastern Asia. So our criteria are no longer the laws of Nature, but (1) Hindemith's stylistic needs, (2) an error of haste stemming from a taste for triads, (3) Western-style harmony and harmonically-controlled melody, and (4) European usage.<sup>36</sup>

Thus it goes with all possible competitors. Scales involving distances smaller than a half-step are discarded by Hindemith because they are (incorrectly) supposed to come out of the seventh harmonic, leading to some of Nature's "terrifying results".<sup>37</sup> Ancient Greek scales will not do, not because of natural defects, but merely as unsuitable for harmony:<sup>38</sup> presumably post-Wagnerian harmony at that. As well complain that the ancient Greeks did not speak German! The mediaeval church modes also are disapproved, again not because of an unnatural constitution, but only because they did not really lend themselves to early polyphony.

In every instance, the "harmonic sense", which is another way of saying our conditioning to a particular way of making music, determines those elementary relations which were supposed to be solely within the province of all-powerful Nature to decide. All the while, Hindemith never ceases to proclaim that his theory transcends matters of style, taste, or usage, that it is impersonal, universal and eternally applicable. It is out of this pure idealism that he wishes only that Nature be put into conformity with certain kinds of "harmonic" practice. In sum, beneath Hindemith's "exhaustive" calculations from the "clearest overtone relations" lies a running appeal to stylistic usage, and even the harmonic series is jettisoned as a "law of gravity" that got in the way. All other speculations about "natural origins" of scales are "arbitrary

<sup>36</sup> *Craft*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>37</sup> "The seventh overtone (sic!) . . . cannot be used. If we attempted to apply the same procedure to it as to its predecessors, we should arrive at terrifying results (*erschreckenden Ergebnissen*). . . . The smallest interval thus far is the minor second between E and F, and it should not be hard (*es dürfte nicht schwer sein*) to establish this as the smallest interval in our scale." *Craft*, p. 37. *Unterweisung*, pp. 55-56.

The "smallest interval" is indeed easily established by observation of "mere" practice. In terms of Hindemith's "natural principles" the proof is not only hard, but impossible. Hindemith, in fact, nowhere makes the attempt, but relies on the assertion, contradicts it by mention of the syntonic comma, and falls back on the argument of practice after all.

<sup>38</sup> *Craft*, p. 25.

selections" guided by taste, for as we well know all competing magicians are always charlatans.

To summarize our objections to Hindemith's "natural" derivation of the 12-tone scale, we may state the following:

- (1) The origin and way of hearing of the scale are not simple or "natural" as promised, but exceedingly involved.
- (2) They rely on the principle of *coincident overtones*, which Hindemith flatly rejects as an explanation of the minor harmony.
- (3) They arbitrarily exclude some tones that would result from the principle. These are not duplicates of tones already present, because of substantial intonation differences.
- (4) The derivations are based on imaginary overtones of imaginary fundamentals, and not on the real facts of hearing. The dependence upon relations "felt" in the subconscious begs the question of a "natural" theory.
- (5) The principle admits of no recognition of the real history of scales or of their variation in different culture-areas.
- (6) Despite denials, the results emerge as a transparent rationalization of the procedures of a familiar style, which is what the "natural" and general theory is supposed to overcome.
- (7) The objections to numerous other types of scales which are admittedly also to be "proven" in Nature are specious, and they reduce themselves to an arbitrary stylistic preference.
- (8) No acceptable reason is given, assuming the validity of the principle, for stopping the process of derivation at the 6th partial. From a speculative standpoint, the scale would acquire an infinite number of tones.

We may well ask whether there are any better "natural" explanations of the scale than Hindemith's. In our view, there are none. And our conclusion must be, not that we must continue the speculative tourneys of the past thousand years or so, as Hindemith has been doing, but we must recognize finally that the source of the musical scale is neither Nature nor abstract numbers, it is the history of the art of music. This is the only assumption that can account for its known variation in historical time and in different cultures. Scales are doubtless influenced, but they are not determined, by certain elementary psycho-acoustic phenomena, notably the special perceptual configurations of the octave and the fifth. In all else they are domesticated, not natural products. And it only obscures our understanding when Hindemith imposes numerical calculations upon half-digested acoustic *data*, in the name of Nature, and then at every difficulty retreats into reasoning by that second Nature which is the familiar system of music for him and for us.

The most severe of Hindemith's troubles with Nature occur in his account of the minor harmony, not so much because Nature is notoriously coy about the matter, as because Hindemith projects upon it a kind of scholastic reasoning that should make even his "far-fetched" predecessors wince. Hindemith is not content to demonstrate that in some vague fashion the modest minor is a step-child of Nature, and so "inferior" to the major. This showing could be designated harmless if wasted, since in traditional practice, overriding all the theoretical difficulties, the minor harmony is uniformly used as the modal opposite of the major, but also its equal.



But Hindemith, objectively setting aside the stylistic proclivities for which he is well known, desires here to depart from familiar practice in the direction of a complete obliteration of that very modal opposition between major and minor. Instead of stating his aim as such, he attempts first to prove that the minor triad does not readily occur in Nature, which is putting it mildly, and then claims that there is really no difference between the major and minor. So remarkable a position becomes an interesting lesson in "natural" logic.

To Hindemith, the minor triad is a "clouding" of the major, a kind of inadequate version of it. In the course of a slow *glissando* from the minor third to the major, "one cannot even say definitely where the minor third leaves off and the major third begins", and therefore he does not "believe in any polarity of the two chords".<sup>39</sup> Triads may "be interpreted as major or minor, according to the context". In the face of such "natural" faith, it would appear willful to ask whether we do not *hear* or *judge* a modal polarity. But Hindemith solemnly admits that his general and "inalterable" dictate of Nature does not hold true in fact: "Why the almost negligible distance between the major and minor thirds should have such extraordinary psychological significance remains a mystery".<sup>40</sup>

So, because one can make a transition by very small degrees between the minor and the major third, therefore the two are the same. But this might also apply to other musical distances. We can make a gradual transition between the leading note and the octave, in fact the usual intonation difference would be smaller in this case, yet these two scale degrees are dramatically different. We might also consider proceeding by infinitesimal changes of position from Berlin to New Haven, but at some point along the way a rather distinct qualitative change is felt, as a result of which we cease to speak German and undertake to use English instead.

Though Hindemith somehow overlooks "blue-notes", the "node" between the major and the minor third, which he showed to be an extraordinary psychological fiction, returns to us as a kind of "neutral dead spot". On one side of this "dead spot", the major third acquires vigorous life in a kind of psychic "field of force" which imparts to it "impulse, light and energy", while the more "cloudy" minor third is tagged with a "heavy and dull character" and a feeling of "rest". Now such descriptions are obviously a holdover from the usual metaphor by which the academicians have tried to account for the "ethos" of major and minor. We see no reason for Hindemith unwittingly to repeat these tales, just after proving to us why he did not believe them. It would have been better if he had frankly stated instead, that for purposes of his special usage, major and minor thirds are to be handled interchangeably in such fashion that modal differences would be suppressed.

<sup>39</sup> *Craft*, p. 78. "Ich halte ihn, einer auch nicht mehr ganz neuen Theorie folgend, für eine Trübung des Durdreiklangs. Da es nicht einmal möglich ist, kleine und grosse Terz erwandfrei gegeneinander abzugrenzen, glaube ich nicht an einen polaren Gegensatz der beiden Akkorde." *Unterweisung*, p. 101.

<sup>40</sup> *Craft*, p. 79. "Warum der kaum nennenswerten Entfernung von der kleinen zur grossen Terz eine so ausserordentliche psychologische Wirkung eignet, ist nach wie vor ein ungelöstes Rätsel." *Unterweisung*, p. 102.



Somewhat related to the differential between major and minor, and also implicit in Hindemith's other errors, is his dealing with intonation problems. While we cannot go fully into these problems here, it is distressing that Hindemith should still claim, without evidence, that musicians prefer Just Intonation and follow it in practice; that enharmonic differences in notation are meaningless and futile; and that these same enharmonic differences in fact are also inescapable and beautiful.

In his assumption of Just Intonation, Hindemith hardly so much as hints that any other variable or unequal principle of intonation exists. To him it is plain, as to the most naive student of the uninformed fiddle teacher, that since the major third of the equally-tempered piano is false, that proves that the theorist's value of the ratio 4 : 5 is right. Instead of facts we are given the usual odes in praise of the pure virtues of Nature's own intervals as compared with the abominable equal temperament. Thus Hindemith is at the elementary "uplift" stage of the study of intonation, wherein it is demonstrated by neat formulae that "pure" intonation reflects the purity of the harmonic partials 4-5-6 because "purity" is very cleverly defined as the property of the harmonic partials 4-5-6.

One effect of Hindemith's lack of clarity on intonation problems is to aid him in obscuring the difference between the major and the minor third. For by Just Intonation, these are only 70 cents apart, as compared with the 100 cents of equal temperament and the 114 of the Pythagorean values. Thus the Pythagorean treatment of the thirds, in practice, is very striking evidence of the importance in music of that modal polarity which Hindemith denies. Another question about Hindemith's attitude towards intonation is why the "natural" 12-tone scale he conceives employs almost entirely "flat" tones for the "chromatics", since only in the deplorable equal temperament are these the same as their "sharp" equivalents. Finally, the ground is laid for a complete muddle on the one question that makes a difference to Hindemith's stylistic objectives: we are led to ignore the intonation differentials between enharmonically equivalent intervals.

Hindemith rejects a Pythagorean value for the major third because it has "so little correspondence with anything in Nature."<sup>41</sup> It is somewhat late, therefore, to recall some simple facts and principles. In Just or Pure Intonation, a sharp tone is invariably lower than its enharmonically equivalent flat, but by Pythagorean tuning this is reversed, and the sharp tone is invariably higher. Now musicians consistently play the sharps distinctly higher than the corresponding flats, and they approach very closely the Pythagorean values. In practice they are about as far away as they can get from the much-vaunted Pure intervals, even though many of them still do not know this. And everyone listening to music prefers the Pythagorean tunings, and does not like Just or Pure values when these are offered, save in occasional isolated chords. These things have been convincingly demonstrated in careful experiment for the past two centuries, though the facts have not stopped the daily eulogies of the glorious Just Purities by those who copy their prayers from the old books.

<sup>41</sup> *Craft*, p. 33.

Since Hindemith's instrument is the viola, we may remark that Pythagorean Intonation is most strikingly and carefully observed by players of stringed instruments, and we would venture to say, by Hindemith himself.

But quite apart from the principle employed, Hindemith is also unclear as to the meaning of intonation practices for the treatment of enharmonic terms. He seems to feel, on the one hand, that enharmonic differences do not exist, and on the other hand that they must be and are observed. He insists on distinguishing the comma between sharps and flats, without saying which is the higher, but then he claims that this is all an illusion fostered by our inadequate system of notation. The enharmonic differential is "demanded" by polyphonic music,<sup>42</sup> yet it is observed only on paper.<sup>43</sup> "Natural relations" and "movable intervals" are conveyed by instruments and voices not tied to the limitations of the keyboard, for our sensitive pleasure,<sup>44</sup> and the observance of an unspecified "comma discrepancy" is "deeply rooted in the life of the soul" as an "unconscious desire",<sup>45</sup> yet any interval approximating to the ratio 5 : 6 is always heard as a minor third, even if it be intended for an augmented second.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, enharmonic differentiation arises entirely in the process of melodic motion and in the relations among intervals and chords, and it is to aid in our perception of this process that "tendency tones" as well as modal contraries are clearly specified in our traditional music. These "directed" chromatics and strong modal contrasts are best produced by intonation that approaches Pythagorean values. If Hindemith's garbled, yet unqualified assertions about enharmonic differences were true, then our musical practice as well as our scheme of notation has gone incurably astray for all these centuries. Composers have been deluding themselves into the observation of insubstantial hair-splittings. Performers, on the one hand, have been studying hard to achieve subtle understanding of illusory intentions of composers, but on the other hand, they have worked even harder to render these non-existent intentions in living sound; alas, to no avail, since nobody hears the difference anyhow, we think all augmented seconds are minor thirds.

Yet the equalizing of real intervals results in a drastic and even an intolerable loss to the art of music. "In equal temperament", complains Hindemith, "there is no such adaptation to the fundamental tone, and thus to sensitive ears music performed on keyboard instruments lacks the fine lustre of the light that falls at ever-changing angles as it is cast by different generators. It does not have any of that fine inner agitation that arises from slight variations of pitch".<sup>47</sup> But what is the good of all these subtleties of intonation change, if it is insisted that we hear all the intervals alike, regardless? And what are we

<sup>42</sup> *Craft*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>43</sup> "Because of our constant use of chromatic and enharmonic formations, we differentiate between the two intervals nowadays only on paper." *Craft*, p. 81. *Unterweisung*, p. 104.

<sup>44</sup> *Craft*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>45</sup> *Craft*, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup> "An interval whose tones stand only roughly in the proportions 5 : 6 is always heard by the ear as a minor third, whether it is written and intended by the composer as an augmented second, a minor third, or a doubly diminished fourth." *Craft*, p. 93. *Unterweisung*, p. 117.

<sup>47</sup> *Craft*, p. 43. *Unterweisung*, p. 62.

to say of our most incredible subconscious ears? They are keen enough to detect how a *G flat* is derived inversely from its third partial, which is the fourth partial of a *D flat* whose fifth partial is identical with the fourth partial of an *F* whose third partial is also an overtone of *C*—let us pause for breath—so keen are our ears, yet they cannot tell us that the same *G flat*, when resolving down towards an *F*, should be and is somewhat lower in pitch than an *F#* resolving upwards to *G*.

Beyond doubt the terms of criticism required for our analytic task may seem harsh when applied to the theoretical views of a composer who, after all, has achieved unquestioned standing and who is, moreover, an amiable and intelligent person. But Hindemith's vaunted "general" theory is built upon a speculative, not a factual basis, and its ramifications do not check with the factual evidence. To the extent that they are meaningful, his ventures into acoustic terminology are designed only to bolster certain very special and also certain very ordinary stylistic prejudices which, if they are not indeed the eternal and inescapable laws of Nature, have at least the virtue of being Hindemith's own preferences, though some will scoff that these are not necessarily the same things.

Hindemith does not study the real nature of music, neither the nature of the material medium through which the art of music comes alive, nor the nature of the human purposes which have brought about every facet of the art. His concern is with the non-human mechanics of a non-material world, though he thinks of these as superhuman and super-mundane. Hindemith's Nature is veiled in the ghostly embodiments of abstracted prime numbers, and dwells among inaudible entities and proportions, in distant nebulae, in the flux of electrons and the evocative tones of the subconscious. Hindemith wishes to revive in music theory what tonal materials meant to the ancients: "Intervals spoke to them of the first days of the creation of the world: mysterious as Number, of the same stuff as the basic concepts of time and space, the very dimensions of the audible as of the visible world, building stones of the universe, which, in their minds, was constructed in the same proportions as the overtone series, so that measure, music, and cosmos inseparably merged".<sup>48</sup>

Thus Hindemith does not give us Nature, but in her stead some more or less ingenious manipulations of cycles and epicycles, of triangulations and of cubes, of alternate multiplications and divisions, of ideal pseudo-electrons and pseudo-planets, and above all the reflections thereof in that wondrous and capacious subconscious, which is so convenient a repository, by definition, of everything we do not know or cannot answer.

Our quarrel with Hindemith is not so much that his musical theories are weak, for this is not so rare an achievement; nor that we are dealing with the views of a creative artist, still of a generation when irrational vagueness passes for a sign of both profundity and genius. The trouble does not lie in the glaring errors of detail, but with the underlying philosophy, for this is sure to leave a deeper impression, especially when it is not properly identified.

<sup>48</sup> *Craft*, pp. 12-13.

Hindemith *pretends* to be modern and scientific, and at every turn he dazzles the unwary with the language of mathematics, of astronomy, and of physics, and he even talks of experiments. Yet he is not concerned with Nature, but with a revival of mediaeval speculation about magic numbers. Hindemith's "experiments" consist of his private contemplation of triangles and syllogisms, and he should not therefore hint to us that his results come directly from the laboratory. When he claims an exactitude in thinking about technical matters,<sup>49</sup> he should notify us also of his prior initiation in the "unlimited world of faith". For the sake of clarity, the old myths of *musica mundana* should not be concealed in jargon taken from the exact sciences. And when Hindemith decries the modern "formalism that makes the artificialities of the early Netherland contrapuntists seem like child's play",<sup>50</sup> this should not conceal his own operations with inverted crab-cans and with third-circle derivations of *F#*.

We have no objection if Hindemith the hobbyist entertains himself with time-tables. We may even invent for him a hitherto untapped series of games, for ordinary dice can wonderfully represent to us the harmonic partials 1 to 6 in their electronic flux. But we do demur strongly when he lays claim to an intimacy with a Nature whom he has maligned, misrepresented, misused, and cast adrift as soon as he had practical affairs to attend. It is unbecoming for him to cower again behind the skirts of Nature when he has been caught consorting both with routine academic codes and with the sprites of the planetary orbits. We need no pretence about Nature in a philosophy of music that returns us to mediaevalism in the guise of modern advance, that palms off number-magic as knowledge and conservatory rules as eternal truth. Let Hindemith drop his references to Nature from his theoretical speculations, so that we will recognize his theory for what it is.

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<sup>49</sup> *Composer's World*, p. vii.

<sup>50</sup> *Craft*, p. 154.

## First Performances

### SCHÖNBERG AND STRAVINSKY: SCHÖNBERGIANS AND STRAVINSKYIANS

#### I

It is not generally known that Schönberg was not a Schönbergian. Unlike many a self-styled twelve-tone expert, he did not teach the twelve-tone technique, and unlike René Leibowitz,\* he did not consider Schönberg, Berg and Webern "the only musical geniuses of our time". In the interests of musicology, it would be important to know whether Leibowitz fainted when he heard that Schönberg thought Gershwin a great composer. I gather that Schönberg was not far from fainting himself when Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno (*Die Philosophie der neuen Musik*), after due reservations, qualifications, obsessional complications, and beggings of the question at the rate of about two per printed page, modelled Stravinsky into a death-mask of the past and appointed Schönberg to model the future. Schönberg was in fact alive to Stravinsky's genius and deplored the infrequent performances of his later works; needless to add, this was pre-*Rake* and may well have been said in view of the *Mass*.

Stravinsky, in his turn, is not a Stravinskyian either, and has always shown the greatest interest in performances of Schönberg's works, whereas the Stravinskyians have preferred to derive their knowledge of Schönberg's thoughts and technical procedures from their own jokes about them, thus appropriating a critical method which the music critics have always claimed as their very own. Frank Howes, for example, still lives on the conclusions he has drawn from the joke he once made about "dodecacophony", and is at present engaged in recurrent declarations to the effect that Schönberg was not a composer at all, a heroic opinion since, of late, it appears to find itself in the minority of one; not even Schönberg ever reached this degree of esotericism. Again, Eric Blom would appear to derive a variety of fruitful results from his humorous observation that Schönberg took himself too seriously, an opinion which one can appreciate in view of the playfully modest negligence with which our respected colleague is wont to treat his own criticisms, at any rate so long as they are not opposed by anybody else. Curiously, Mr. Blom has not yet discovered the worthiest object for his humour—Hindemith, who does take himself too seriously,† inasmuch as he tends to develop his theories at the expense of the work of other leading contemporary figures—an approach of which neither Schönberg nor Stravinsky can be accused. In fact, Hindemith is even more of an Hindemithian than Leibowitz is a Schönbergian.

#### II

In this somewhat tedious state of complex party strife in which two of the three great "party leaders" take no part, it is sometimes easier for the understanding musician to see the truth than to tell it. Immediately he adopts—as, I think, he must adopt—a point of view in the neighbourhood of (though at a disrespectful distance from) Wiesengrund-Adorno's, he will be relegated to the realm of the "Schönbergians" by Stravinskyians and critics alike. The label itself will not bother him much, first because it has probably been appended on him on previous occasions anyway, and secondly, in view of the fact that he would not, after all, object to being called, say, a Beethovenian. What will disturb him is the circumstance that being labelled "Schönbergian", the truths he is trying to communicate will anon be identified with, and submerged under the views of the Schönbergians, and in no time he will be cited to have produced the very untruths, half-truths, and three-quarter-truths arrived at by way of invalid inferences, against which he wanted to set off his own standpoint.

\* *Schoenberg and his School*, trans. Dika Newlin, New York, 1949, p. xvi.

† See the articles by Cazden and Stephan in this issue [Ed.].



There are two possible ways out of the dilemma. One, which is usually chosen by writers in similar straits, is to distort one's own communication strategically and diplomatically, anticipating the most dangerous reactions to it and attempting to modify and mollify them in advance by means of compromises and conciliatory manoeuvres, even though a good deal of objectively established truth may go by the board in the process. The other way is to state the truth without regard for its reception, to winter one's truths as it were until the spring sun dispels the fog with which they will inevitably be surrounded. If the observer in question happens to be a psychologist as well as a musician, thus able, may be, to offer a few scraps of truth about the unconscious which, by its very nature, is damp and productive of fog, it will be a lengthy winter indeed. However, after ages of elaborate theories of cognition, it is time that we embarked upon its indiscreet practice.

### III

In our tabular survey of first performances (MR, Feb., 1954), I have pointed to the fact that "the most strikingly new technical feature" of Stravinsky's Cantata of 1952 was "the (tonal) adoption of serial technique" in the tenor's *Ricercar* II and, half a year later in the same feature (MR, Aug., 1954), Erwin Stein has drawn attention to "bitonal serial technique producing the closest contrapuntal thematicism" in Stravinsky's Septet of 1953. It must be emphasized that these adoptions of Schönberg's technique are obvious analytical *data*, not a matter of opinion at all; the fact that there has been some controversy about the matter is merely due to the fact that the anti-Schönbergians don't know anything about the application of the serial method. On the other hand, the Schönbergians who do, tend to note Stravinsky's new departure with infantile glee, as if a new victory had been won in party politics. The only point in which their feelings may, in fact, be based on a correct evaluation is that Schönberg's historical significance is herewith increased—in proportion, indeed, as Stravinsky's tonal and polytonal versions of serialism prove of musical value (a corollary which the Schönbergians may not feel inclined to heed).

Musically unimportant, but psychologically of the concretest interest is the fact that Stravinsky's "Schönbergisms" started after Schönberg's death. Unconscious incorporation is a reaction, well-known psychologically, to the death of a person, often an actual or potential parent figure, whose image within the reactor's mind had been charged with intense, and often highly ambivalent emotion. For me, the causal connection between Schönberg's death and his method's rebirth in Stravinsky (which I first suspected in view of the Cantata) was clinched by two objective symptoms, *i.e.* (1) that in the Septet, the composer gave, quite unnecessarily, the title "row" to scalar basses which have nothing whatever to do with his serial technique and are used to confirm tonality, and (2) that in an interview with Arthur Jacobs, he reacted strongly against the latter's somewhat inquisitive query about the sometimes-mentioned Schönbergian influence upon the Septet, remembering, upon this occasion, that the Russian equivalent of "row" was used for the concept of the scale, and pointing to the tonal function of his "rows". For the psychoanalytically trained musician, the situation now seems crystal-clear. The incorporation of Schönberg's method has, of course, developed on an unconscious, *i.e.* repressed level. Its rationalization may take the form of Stravinsky's probable belief that he "has it" from the old contrapuntists. What is known as "the return of the repressed" manifests itself in his—musically purposeless—employment of the word "row" in the score of the Septet. As always, this "return" results in a "compromise formation" between the repressed and the repressing agencies: by way of the unconscious mechanism of "displacement", the word "row", whose atonal implications are not tolerated, is transferred from the composition's actual note-rows to the basic confirmation of tonality. The associative channel which makes this operation possible is given by the Russian meaning of "row" which, in fact, turns up as rationalization in defence against Jacobs' (psychologically speaking) dangerous attack upon

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Stravinsky's unconscious: our friend put his foot into it, as one might easily have told him in advance; in addition, there are two further possible associations which, on the basis of the Russian identity of "row" and "scale", may well have furthered the process. One is a very legitimate association between "row" and "scale": in pre-twelve-tonal, serial days, the chromatic scale was called the "twelve-tone row", a fact of which Stravinsky is probably aware; secondly, when the twelve-tone row proper had emerged, critics of dodecaphony continued to identify the "tone-row" with the chromatic scale. Sure enough, the rôle of Stravinsky's so-called "rows" in the Septet corresponds to that of the chromatic scale in a twelve-tone composition. If my interpretation is correct, a second "return of the repressed" is involved: the original meaning of the term "row" lurks in the background, suggesting that we are not so far removed from Schönberg as the overt application of the term would have it.

If, then, we may characterize the latest Stravinsky as, partially, an even intenser unconscious Schönbergian than his adoption of Schönberg's method indicates *per se*, we have to emphasize, at the same time, that no evaluation whatsoever emerges from our psychological analysis; we hope it is not necessary to point out that questions of musical value can only be decided on intra-musical evidence, without reference to either history or psychology. What our analysis does suggest is that musical history, by which I mean, not the chronology of styles but the evolution of techniques, can profit greatly by the application of psychoanalysis. As long as musicology takes no more than amateur notice of the clinically established results of depth psychology and, for the rest, chiefly concerns itself with *textual criticism* on the one hand and the *history of music* on the other, it has no right to its bombastic title, its fields of competence being adequately described by the italicized concepts. "Musicology" is a translation of the French *musicologie* which in its turn derives from the German *Musikwissenschaft* (science of music), first introduced by F. Chrysander in 1863; but in 1954, the majority of "musicologists" are entirely ignorant of scientific method and have never done an honest piece of scientific work in their lives.

#### IV

In the interests of neat symmetry, our essay would, at this point, welcome the discovery that Schönberg was an unconscious Stravinskyian. Some support for such a suggestion would indeed seem to be forthcoming: one or two critics maintain that the "Dance round the Golden Calf" from the opera, *Moses und Aron* (reviewed by Erwin Stein in our last tabular survey, Aug., 1954) is strongly influenced by *The Rite of Spring*. However, this view does not bear the most cursory technical examination—and here a comparative evaluation is quite in order; in fact, if ever two pieces were comparable, these are the two. They are, musically speaking, "about" the same ideas and emotions, and avail themselves of the same formal and textural categories of expression; the simple question arises which of the two expresses itself better and more fully. In drastic view of the "Dance round the Golden Calf", I consider *The Rite of Spring*, whatever its historical rôle may have been, a musical failure and cannot see that it has any chance of survival, except as a museum piece. Emotionally it is all too sophisticated, whereas compositionally it employs the most primitive methods. With the "Dance", it is exactly the other way round. Emotionally it dives into the most frighteningly primitive depths which no music had hitherto touched (we remember Erwin Stein's observation, "... range of expression from utmost tenderness to the most brutal violence"), whereas in musical thought and development it is a marvel of the clearest, yet extremest and subtlest complexity which make it possible for the composer to express heaven and hell, as well as the prose-poetic future and the rhyming past, in one and the same piece, and even at one and the same time.

There is a psychological possibility, perhaps even a probability, of the *Rite's* having influenced the *Dance* in an extra-musical way: Schönberg's unconscious or preconscious may well have thought, "I'll show him how to do this sort of thing". (Our unconscious minds demean themselves like that.) If such should have been the case, we should again

be confronted with a somewhat hostile identification, and Schönberg would have been, after all, a temporary and unconscious Stravinskyian, but only sub-musically, nowise in musical terms. As a matter of musical fact I submit, in any case, that the *Rite* is a dance and the *Dance* a rite.

It might, of course, be pointed out that it is unfair to compare a work of the 31-year-old Stravinsky with a work of the 58-year-old Schönberg, but my comparison between the two pieces is not concerned with fairness—*i.e.* with a comparison between their respective composers—at all. If we wish to attempt an evaluating comparison between the two poles of the contemporary musical situation (or may we say, on the basis of this article, the ex-poles?), we must compare, *inter alia*, in developmental terms, and consider where, and how far, either composer has developed. If we are not careful, we shall thus land ourselves in Wiesengrund-Adorno.

## V

Just as there is, in my submission, a *psychological* causal connection between Schönberg's death and the birth of Stravinsky's serial techniques, there is a *musical* causal connection between Stravinsky's emergence as a pure contrapuntist and chamber musician and his employment of serialism. Schönberg had always been a contrapuntist and a chamber-musician—even in the *Verklärte Nacht* and the *Gurrelieder*: unfortunately, our critics are more adept in reading the first page of a score (the one where the instrumentation is given in letter type) than in deciphering the subsequent pages of music type which, in the case of the *Gurrelieder*, would give them some chamber-musical surprises if they could read them—or if they would listen to the textures instead of staring at the orchestra. It was in fact his contrapuntal character which drove Schönberg towards solo instrumentation and which, later, came to be responsible, amongst other factors, for the development of serial technique. All serial methods, twelve-tonal or tonal, are basically polyphonic; their harmonic aspects, however obtrusive in certain special instances (*e.g.* the opening of Schönberg's own 4th string Quartet), are secondary phenomena, and every essentially harmonic mind known to me that has dabbled in serial techniques has come to musical grief. Now, there can no longer be any doubt that a new contrapuntal age is on the way; it is only because most of our music critics, with their homophonic ears, cannot follow the new polyphony at all, that this fact is not yet "officially" recognized. (In this connection, it is relevant to remember that Frank Howes buried Stravinsky along with Schönberg, whereupon Peter Pears—neither a Schönbergian nor a Stravinskyian—proposed to confer upon him the honorary title of the "Grand Undertaker of Music". Some considerable time later, on 18th November, 1953, Mr. Howes exhumed the body in view of the Cantata, in order to subject it to the following *post mortem*: "Stravinsky may, if he pleases, knit with chattering inexpressive wind instruments, but let him keep his doctrinaire hands off English poetry, for which . . . he has no ear".—See our tabular survey of Feb., 1954). There can likewise be no doubt that owing to the progressive weakening of diatonic cadential functions, the new counterpoint will become increasingly serial, both in its atonal and in its tonal spheres. With Stravinsky's becoming a Schönbergian in matters contrapuntal, this prognosis is changing into wisdom after the event. Stravinsky is ceasing to be Schönberg's counter-pole and is turning into what we might call Schönberg's counterpoint.

## Film Music and Beyond

### GEORGES AURIC AT FILM MUSIC'S BEST

A CONTINENTAL revival of *La P... Respectueuse*, a 2- or 3-year-old film after Sartre's play of the same title, gave me a chance to hear an important Auric score which, so far as I am aware, has never reached this country, whereas an English translation of Sartre's original drama (*The Respectable Prostitute*) has. As might be expected, the film waters down Sartre's incisive criticism of American negrophobia. There are passages in the original dialogue which establish its author as perhaps the first virtuoso in the field of applied philosophy—an achievement which may very well prove decisive, for while pure virtuosity has died out in the realm of music in order for music to survive, philosophy can only survive as a social force if it brings forth virtuosos of the truly and honestly dazzling variety: the esoteric riddles of both the psychic and the time-space universe are being taken care of nowadays by other departments of the enquiring mind. Unfortunately, however, more than the inevitable measure of the original play's significance goes by the board in the film, whose makers have all too conscientiously tried to make at least parts of an unfilmic structure filmogenic. As a result, the entire exposition of the drama has received a kind of treatment that is the exact opposite of artistic method as such: instead of compression, we get empty extensions which are designed to make room for filmable detail. Nevertheless, enough substance of both ethical feeling and psychologically philosophical thought has remained to stimulate Georges Auric towards one of the weightiest and, at the same time, one of the most economical film scores he has yet supplied in his somewhat over-productive career as a film composer. By way of incidental nourishment, his piece has provided us with a four-course meal for thought.

#### (1) THE FILM COMPOSER AND HIS FILM

The operative word is the possessive pronoun, the critical point the artist's possessiveness. Anyone who has had an opportunity of observing a visual artist (especially a portraitist) at work, must have been struck by the fact that his mind depends for its inspiration, to a variable extent, on the psychic love- or hate-relationship which he is able to establish with his object or subject. *A posteriori*, this is perhaps most obvious in the case of a sexual (Toulouse-Lautrec) or religious love object on the one hand, or a political hate object (caricature) on the other; for the progeny of the latter relationship, Ernst Kris\* happy characterization, "the dissolution of unity in the interests of aggression", springs to mind. Turning to our own art, we find that the song writer, the composer of cantatas, oratorios, operas and so forth, is usually able freely to choose his love object as one human being can choose another in our society, whereas the writer of incidental music for the stage, or not so incidental music for the cinema, is often at the mercy of a complex marriage market, of matchmakers and arranged marriages. The composer of stage music can at least continue his own life up to a satisfactory point, writing his own kind of music without bothering too much about marital adjustment, but the film musician is inevitably drawn into a close relationship with the film, whether the bond be artistic or not. Anyone talking to a "pure" musician writing for the film will be struck by the composer's intense reactions to the particular picture for which he is providing the music, and which tends to be either "excellent" or "rotten". Composers are usually of the opinion that "only good films" will produce good music in the musician's mind; it would no doubt be more accurate to say—"only films with which the composer is capable of forming a positive (love) relation", whatever their more objective value. Hate relations are of no avail in the film-musical set-up—if we disregard Malcolm Arnold's exceptional and remarkable *Captain's Paradise* (see MR, Aug., 1953, p. 222),

\* "The Psychology of Caricature", *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, XVII, 1936.

which seems to show a distinctly ambivalent attitude on the part of the composer: sheltering behind the attitude of irony which the film requires him to employ, he gets his own back on "the art of the film" by laughing—unofficially, but all the more effectively and musically—at the entire film world, thus furnishing an eminently artistic example of "the dissolution of (sham) unity in the interests of aggression". Auric's own *La Fête à Henriette*, which indulges in the selfsame destructive process, does so officially, because the film itself adopts a self-ironical, antifilmic attitude, offering the composer an opportunity to identify himself with it.

Identification (or, in stricter psychoanalytical parlance, "introjection") and unidentifying love ("object-cathexis", according to the psychoanalyst's vocabulary) would indeed seem to be the two positive attitudes towards a film which, separately or in combination, determine the nature of a composer's "possessiveness" and the quality of his work, the question of whether one or the other attitude or both manifest themselves depending on the character not only of the film, but also, probably more so, of the composer himself. With Auric's better scores (*It Always Rains on Sunday*, *La Belle et la Bête*—to mention only two of the best-remembered), it usually appears to be a case of predominant identification, but most of his more recent efforts, such as *The Titfield Thunderbolt*, the famous *Moulin Rouge* which is still being whistled all over the European continent and isles, *The Wages of Fear*, or his music for the adaptation of G. K. Chesterton's *Father Brown* stories, would seem to be the result more of matchmaking than of one or the other kind of love-making. The score for *La P... Respectueuse*, on the other hand, strikes me as a case of identification *par excellence*, which is why I have permitted myself a few introductory remarks on the film itself: essentially, it is a tendentious drama, whence it offered the composer an opportunity for a twofold identification, affecting not only his conscious and unconscious self ("ego"), but also his unconscious and conscious conscience ("superego" and "ego-ideal"). In Auric's opinion, it is no doubt an "excellent" film. Perhaps, then, the motion picture is the only artistic or semi-artistic medium where "committed art" easily results in good music, simply because all good film music springs from a full-blooded commitment in the first place.

## (2) THE UNDEVELOPING FILM COMPOSER

A clear conclusion emerges from our psychological analysis: as long as the film composer's "marriages" must needs consist of what, from the standpoint of his own artistic "love life", is a more or less accidental succession of good and (chiefly) bad matches, he can hardly develop as a film composer, even though his film work may reflect his development as a composer. In all other fields of applied music (except for incidental stage music, and including such forms as the scenic oratorio), the composer has a chance to develop along the special path chosen: Mozart developed not only as a composer, but also as an opera composer; in fact, his operatic development had diverse repercussive effects upon his development as a composer. And just as the development of opera depends to no small extent on the development of opera composers, the curious circumstance that there has not, to date, been any genuine film-musical history is due to the fact that the film composer is not allowed to develop. *La P... Respectueuse* is chronologically surrounded by Aurician film music of comparatively feeble interest and does not prove the result of individual film-musical development, though Auric's development as a composer may possibly have something to do with the quality of this music. In a moderately ideal society, film-musical development could have a continuous refreshing influence on musical evolution; as things stand, however, the undeveloping film composer exerts a pernicious influence on the less resistant parts of both his own and other composers' creative minds. Arnold Schönberg, who was given to radical solutions, uncompromising and unsullied, in this field as in any other, wrote his "Music for a Film Scene" (*Musik zu einer Lichtspielszene\**) for an imaginary love-object, as it were: the film itself has not yet been supplied. But the laws of supply and demand have a wider

\* op. 34, 1930, published by Heinrichshofen at Wilhelmshaven.

application than is dreamt of in the political economist's philosophy, and if every good film composer wrote an imaginary film score every year, thus "demanding" the appropriate kind of film, one or the other adventurous film-maker would sooner or later oblige. Man creates his love objects in his own images' image.

### (3) FILM-MUSICAL INNOVATION

A corollary to our conclusion is that film-musical innovations of lasting musico-dramatic or musical significance will be few and far between, as if the art suffered from an unprecedented and highly confusing complaint, namely, embryonic senility. All the more reason, then, for the music critic to notice novel features when they do turn up. Having contributed, in succeeding as well as previous films, a multitude of epigonic ideas and devices, Auric turns one of the most constant Hollywoodian hair-raisers upside down in *La P... Respectueuse*, and thus introduces a highly logical device into film music. We all know those well-feared climaxes of frequent occurrence where the heroine, love-sick and re-creatively inspired, commences a not altogether unknown Chopin Nocturne upon her private pianoforte, and is anon joined by what appears to be the yearning harmony of the spheres in the form of a highly stringy orchestral accompaniment, compared with which Chopin's own attempts at concerto texture and structure are of Mozartian finesse. With a simple, almost genius-like stroke of the practised film-musician's pen, Auric inverts this procedure: a straight piece of jazz is heard as background music, continues over the change of filmic sequence, and emerges as realistic dance music in the subsequent scene. Instead of a hopeless contradiction and confusion of dramatic levels, then, we get a pre-realistic anticipation of reality: idea develops into fact, background into foreground, one musico-dramatic level into another, so that we can see the present (the sequence accompanied by background jazz) in the light of the future (the dance), the causes in the light of their effects.

Significantly enough, this tendency to turn conventional stratagems into meaningful devices, and epigonism, pastiche and quotation into characteristic commentary, is apparent throughout the score. Instead of embarrassing parodies, variational treatment, etc., of the *Kleine Nachtmusik* (The *Titfield Thunderbolt*) of an Offenbach excerpt (*Moulin Rouge*) or a Viennese operetta-phrase (*Father Brown*), instead of downright imitation music (*ibid.*), we hear, for instance, a sharply significant injection of a boogie-woogie bass *ostinato* in C into a piece of a quite different nature, which would show up, if showing up were needed, the sterility of Rolf Liebermann's boogie-woogie in the first act of his new opera, *Penelope*: a bad boogie-woogie, he might have realized, does not make a good parody or caricature. His is indeed one of the most drastic examples of the results of film music's fatal influence, whereas Auric demonstrates the sort of influence film music could exert in an artistic climate.

### (4) FILM-MUSICAL INSTRUMENTATION

Auric's stringless band (chiefly woodwind and percussion) might earn the applause of cultural opposites, such as Stravinsky on the one hand and the communists on the other. According to the latter (Hanns Eisler) school of film-musical thought, the anti-sentimental scoring would, I suppose, be praised because it corresponds to the realistic nature of the cinematic medium. I would arrive at the same conclusion by a diametrically divergent route: the naturalism (read: pseudo-realism) of the cinema makes it, potentially and often actually, the most sentimental and unrealistic creative medium in existence (a kiss doesn't become more realistic through being shown in labial detail), whence it is the composer's task to retrieve the artistic situation, fusing, for instance, an anti-sentimental texture and a structure charged with emotion, i.e. with psychic realism.



## Holland—II

(PERIOD COVERED: 1ST TO 15TH JULY)

THE outstanding characteristic of the Holland Festival is its artistic unconventionality, its relatively uncommercial choice of programmes. While marked attention is paid to new music that is, or may be, good, as well as to geniuses who are outlaws in various other countries (e.g. Bruckner), including sometimes their own (e.g. Mahler), the publicity value of "premières" and "first performances" does not seem to attract the directorate so much as the possible artistic value of second or third productions and performances—of *Lulu* last year, and of Janáček's *Aus einem Totenhaus* this time.

The latter opera has been reviewed in conscientious detail by Charles Reid in this journal's August issue, and it merely remains to be said that he is wrong. Apart from the first two parts of the overture, that is to say, the music is imitative in its styles and utterly primitive in its methods, while the composer's own libretto falsifies Dostoevsky's autobiographical notes and hence historical truth. Nevertheless, since the Janáček of pre-*Totenhaus* times was a composer, and a savagely neglected composer at that, his failure had to be heard before an international forum.

The composer Janáček came into his own in what may easily have been the most enterprising festival programme of the summer, which consisted of his firmly integrated song-cycle, *Tagebuch eines Verschollenen* ("The Diary of One who Vanished") and Stravinsky's *Les Noces*. Freely imaginative and strictly thematic, Janáček's full-blooded, gipsy-like concert drama (my title) for tenor (Ernst Häfliger), contralto (Cora Canne Meijer, a mezzo-soprano), three female voices employed in an antiphonal fashion, and piano (Felix de Nobel), contains more music, indeed more of the stuff that operas are made of, than all imaginable Houses of the Dead; with inspired naivety, the score unfolds by way of at once surprising and inevitable variations, contractions and omissions of expected repetitions and sequences. The Swiss tenor sang the title part with powerful musical assurance, even though he tended to become giddy in the higher regions; the top Cs in the eventual E $\flat$  major, however, were not alone truly tenor-like, but took intense care of the rhythmic structure.

With equal, if not even greater success, both musical and technical, Häfliger reappeared in *Les Noces* under de Nobel, in which the soprano Corry Bijster, the instrumentalists and the Nederlands Kamerkoor likewise distinguished themselves. It was, in fact, an exemplarily well-rehearsed performance, received with exceptional enthusiasm: the *Deuxième Partie* was immediately repeated and—rare occurrence in *da capo* circumstances—further improved.

In his otherwise popular programme, Ormandy included the three *Wozzeck* fragments, sung and played too beautifully by Eleanor Steber and the Concertgebouw: these natural forms do not gain by the beautician's attentions. Thus the D minor epilogue almost became a tautology, and Miss Steger's children's voices, half-heartedly childlike, bordered on *Kitsch*, especially in the "Hopp, hopp" of Marie's boy.

Willem Pijper's piano Concerto (1927), well played by Theo Bruins with The Hague's Residentie Orchestra under Carlo Maria Guilini, is one of our century's many attempts to roll several movements into one, but evades the contemporary problems of concerto form and texture by alternating between solo and orchestral sections; nor are the textures throughout of the audible kind. The modern dance influences (e.g. cake walk and tango) are not sufficiently assimilated and developed to retain their interest at this time of the day, but it must be granted that there are stretches where the composer has more to communicate than many another national figure.

While most of our colleagues are experts on everything, we prefer to call in expert assistance whenever we need it and where it is available (see also *Salzburg* on p. 317): I have asked Donald Mitchell, who is engaged in a special study of Mahler, to comment on the festival performance of the Eighth.

H. K.



## MAHLER'S EIGHTH SYMPHONY

Donald Mitchell writes:—PERFORMANCE: Large forces combined in a performance which was more earnest than inspired and more sympathetic than truly understanding. The Rotterdam Philharmonic and Brabant orchestras, no less than eleven choral societies, and eleven soloists (the best were Annelies Kupper, Hilde Zadek, Frans Vroons and Gottlob Frick) were conducted by Eduard Flipse, a most sincere, industrious musician whose many talents were still too few to cope effectively with the formidable demands of this huge Symphony. The result was a valuable interpretation, offering, however, only a partial revelation of the work's strength, while over-exposing its inevitable weaknesses. The performance took place in Rotterdam's enormous Ahoy' Hall, before an enormous audience of some ten thousand people. Two general rehearsals were sold out, as was the final concert. This exceptionally large-scale interest in Mahler's largest-scale (as distinct from his greatest) Symphony is not without relevance to a consideration of the work's style and structure.

WORK: Performances of the Eighth are few and far between; sensible comments on the work are even scarcer. Since space is short, a table of critical points on and about the music seems to be the most convenient journalistic approach:

- (1) While many details of the work's style, structure and developmental method are characteristic of Mahler's late period, in general Symphony VIII looks backwards rather than forwards, in particular to the "monumental" features of Symphony II, and even more particularly to II's (choral) finale.
- (2) VIII's surprising lack of harmonic tension (*cf.* VII, *Das Lied* and IX, which lie on either side of it!) may be ascribed to:
  - (a) Limitations implicit in the use of vocal forces (it is significant that the work's instrumental interludes are always more advanced than the choral contexts in which they appear), and
  - (b) Mahler's necessary assumption of a mood of affirmation and optimism, a spiritual attitude (no doubt sincerely held) which almost invariably resulted in composition in a broad, diatonic style, either too relaxed or too (superficially) exuberant; a style, in any case, in which he is not heard at his most characteristic. To put it crudely, "affirmation" as such did not draw upon Mahler's deepest resources; his originality withdrew a step or two, along with the decrease in spiritual tension. (One must not confuse this kind of "affirmation" with his childlike "optimism" (*e.g.* finale to IV) which found completely successful and original creative expression.)
- (3) While the strange mediocrity of much of VIII's basic material derives from considerations outlined in (1) and (2), one must also take into account the immense audience for which this music was intended. On one level, the work's very uncomplicated themes (not uncomplicated developments of them!) are wholly successful; they do make a direct appeal (*e.g.* the first movement's first group) to their public, the potential size of which was, I believe, an influential factor, touching upon both style and content, with which Mahler had to deal while composing the Symphony. This view of the work's "tone" is supported by its (for Mahler) unusually full texture. However, if occasional choral and instrumental passages clash stylistically, so, too, do the work's textures. Another point, in fact, to be made about the Symphony is
- (4) the unfaithfulness of its textures to its initial ("public") sound-ideal. This, ironically enough, is one of the work's most intriguing aspects, and the continuous eruption of chamber-musical textures proves both
  - (a) how mistaken are all the approaches to the Symphony which are based on the presumed "gargantuan" dimensions of its instrumentation, and
  - (b) how the rôle of the solo instrument was of increasing significance to Mahler, even when he was in the midst of handling his most elaborate and massive orchestral apparatus.

There is, nevertheless, no doubt that these forward-looking textures create acoustical difficulties (chamber-musical passages are lost in a vast hall), and thus actively contribute to the impression of an arbitrary rise and fall in dramatic and dynamic tension. Yet the work, with no less doubt, if it is to be performed at all, requires its vast hall. Radio, I suggest, is the ideal solution, when the audience cannot mistake the emergence of a chamber-music texture for a sudden exit of Mahler's inspiration. But some miscalculation of intention remains on Mahler's part, though we gain the innovatory textures because of it.

- (5) The exceptionally inspired form of the first movement, which rises to a brilliant peak with the double fugue of the development and then levels off (but not down) into the recapitulation, contrasts, in its tight organization and almost obsessional motivic-work, to the disadvantage of the second movement (the Symphony's second and concluding part), whose looser build, despite many felicities, represents too abrupt a descent to a free, rhapsodic combination of slow movement, scherzo and finale; although this second part is theoretically bound together through perpetual variation of its basic thematic topics, the shapes of the variations are less inspired and distinctive than is customarily the case with Mahler, while the finale, the *Chorus mysticus*, I suspect as an extra-musical phenomenon; its musical substance does not seem to deserve the degree of emotional response it demands.
- (6) Tonality: E♭ major (wide-ranging, but non-progressive); the second part opens in the tonic minor.


To list the many beauties, originalities and inspirations of Mahler's Eighth—the instrumental *adagio* which opens the second part comprises some of his finest pages—one would need more than six paragraphs of comment. I have done no more than attempt to "place" this uneven work of genius in its context, and to suggest profitable lines of approach to its failures and achievements; the latter are numerous enough to ensure the Symphony a regular revival, while from the former much may be learned. Mahler's major failures are more interesting than many another minor composer's successes.

D. M.

Mitchell could not, unfortunately, stay for the closing concert, in which Klemperer conducted the Residentie Orchestra (why not the Concertgebouw?) in the best interpretation, the best re-creative part-writing, as it were (though not the best execution), of Mahler's Fourth I have ever heard, Bruno Walter's by no means excluded. Maria Stader sang in the finale. Mahler's violin fingering in the opening movement has always troubled me: the *glissando* is too long to be graceful. About half a year ago I suggested to Erwin Stein that I suspected the fingering to be the result of Arnold Rosé's advice: in various Rosé editions, I had noted that great player's somewhat obsessional preoccupation with the more "difficult" second and fourth positions at the expense of the (at that time) "easier" first and third. I added that in the interest of the composer's intentions, I should disregard his instructions and replace the change from the fourth to the first position by one from the third to the first. Mr. Stein (who, after all, had been in the midst of things) tended to agree with my diagnosis and proposed therapy, which latter—the reader will imagine my joyful surprise—Klemperer proceeded to apply in the concert under review. Perhaps this coincidental concurrence of interpretative opinion will prompt future conductors to revise likewise.

## Salzburg

25TH JULY TO 30TH AUGUST

THE Festival opened and closed with outstanding concerts—Bruckner's Eighth under Knappertsbusch, and Beethoven's Eighth, *Grosse Fuge*, and Seventh under Furtwängler, "Kna", as he is lovingly called (the inane tendency to oral abbreviation is international). stuck to the revised version of the Bruckner in wellnigh every detail. While not an unconditional *Originalfassung* fan, I should welcome an opportunity for closer aural acquaintance with the Eighth's original version.\* Knappertsbusch has changed since, as a boy, I heard him last. The natural musician is as strong as ever, but his roughness has decreased and his spirituality increased—or is part of all this in the ear of the observer who has meanwhile grown up and learnt to notice more on the one hand and tolerate more on the other? The interpretation, a very serious effort, was both factual and intense throughout, even though the logic of the phrasings was at times interrupted, a typical instance occurring at the outset of the *adagio*, where the 1st violins' second upbeating *ab'* grew a tummy of no mean proportions, misunderstanding the  which extends over the entire phrase, and simply disregarding the direction (in either version of the score), "*zart hervortretend*". It is possible, however, that these offences were the players' fault rather than the conductor's; in the region of and above *ab'* on the G-string, at any rate, things are liable to get intense, irrespective of the requirements of the rhythmic structure, and the playing of the Vienna Philharmonic during the Festival, downright excruciating on one or two occasions, did not inspire confidence in the orchestra's ability to follow a conductor's every wish.

In the *Grosse Fuge*, for example, the string band very nearly ruined Furtwängler's incontestable apologia for the string-orchestral version (Weingartner's in this instance, it appeared). The two symphonies, too, were sublime experiences, the *allegretti* being played at an unusually lively pace.

Furtwängler's interpretations always develop from performance to performance (in fact, from rehearsal to performance), and his *Don Giovanni* has grown noticeably since last year, whereas Herbert Graf's production has preserved its stupidity with unfailing surety of purpose. The musical aspect of the show continues to be decried on account of its slowness, but by now Furtwängler takes no less than five *tempi* markedly faster than any other conductor I know—the *andante con moto* in the "Catalogue" *aria*, Donna Anna's first-act *aria*, both Ottavio *arias*, and the *larghetto* in the second finale.

A critical remark is overdue regarding the *b♭*" which Einstein inserts, quite absurdly in view of Mozart's harmonico-melodic style at that time, in the 13th bar of the body of the Overture (1st vlms.).† Theoretically, there are three possibilities here: (1) either the much-discussed *b♭'* in the 2nd fiddles' preceding bar is, notwithstanding its presence in the autograph, apocryphal, in which case there is, of course, no *B♭* in the passage at all (Peters' solution, for example); or (2) the autograph is correct as it stands; or (3) Mozart forgot the *b♭*" in bar 13 (Einstein's solution). I am obliged to H. C. Robbins Landon for his attempt to clear the matter up on the textual side; the three sources he has examined, all scores, correspond to the autograph. They are:—(a) Donaueschingen, Fürstliches Fürstenbergsches Archiv, copied at Prague in 1787 (*sic!*); (b) Melk, copy by Viennese professional firm (possibly Traeg), c. 1790–1800; (c) Paris, Antiquariat Schneider, copy c. 1790–1810, probably of Austro-German origin. Textual criticism, then, excludes the first of our above-listed alternatives, while musical criticism excludes the third. Remains the second: the autograph is, after all, right. It may be added that the proposed solution cannot be checked against the recapitulation, which Mozart did not write out.

H. K.

\* *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Robert Haas, Vol. viii, Brucknerverlag, Wiesbaden, 1949.

† Edition Eulenburg, No. 918. The *b♭*" is not even given in square brackets.

As for Furtwängler's *Freischütz*, the Editor writes:—

*Freischütz* (16th August) appeals strongly, or should do so, to the child that remains in everyone of us whose imagination retains its zest. Though I am certain that during my own childhood any first-class realization of the piece would have fired the fuse to a chain of terrifying nightmares. However, at the ripe age of 40 this is something I have still to see.

The focal point is, of course, the wolf's glen. All the rest is preamble—some of it excellent—or postlude, most of which is decidedly less inspired. The producer, then, must concentrate on the *Wolfsschlucht* and must obtain from the scene-builder and from the stage-effects department the full co-operation necessary to the accomplishment of a host of bizarre, eerie and, if possible, terrifying happenings, culminating in a disaster of cataclysmic proportions.

*Freischütz* must be taken deathly seriously and it must be played throughout in straight *verismo* style. There are several comparatively simple ways in which the horror of the *Wolfsschlucht* can be built up; for example, the scene in the head forester's house at the beginning of act II should incorporate a window from which the area of the glen can be seen in the distance, and the singers should be encouraged, during rehearsal, to make proper theatrical use of the fact. In this Salzburg production there was such a window, but apparently no-one ever thought of gazing through it transfixed with fear of the unknown. Nor will it do for the producer to wait for the fifth bullet before exerting himself; a proper *Wolfsschlucht*, e.g. on the general lines of Jacob van Ruysdael's "Rocky Landscape," would provide plenty of trees and rocks to fall at frequent intervals and even a building to collapse into the river at the final catastrophe. (But presumably in these enlightened days stage-hands would decline to clear up the resultant mess.)

Of the cast, only Kurt Böhm really took the measure of the piece: his Kaspar was rich, full-blooded melodrama—personifying belief in the potency of the powers of darkness and accepting the *Wolfsschlucht* as the place of their earthly manifestation. Everyone else on the stage seemed to think the whole thing rather silly, which, of course, proved fatal to any true realization of Weber's imaginative flights. At Furtwängler's very leisurely *tempo* the overture almost parodied itself—and Furtwängler! But there was some fine playing at the behest of a musical imagination which at all points outstripped what should have been its dramatic counterpart.

G. N. S.

*Ariadne* under Böhm was remarkable for Seefried's inspired performance as the Composer, whereas Güden, as Zerbinetta, outflirted her part. The opera is the only one to be reproduced next year although, in the long run, it has no chance of survival. (*Entführung* under Böhm, *Zauberflöte* under Furtwängler, Pfitzner's *Palestrina*\* [*bravissimo!*], and the *première* of Werner Egk's *Irische Legende* will complete the operatic programme).

Journalistically speaking (in more than one sense), the chief event was the *première* of Rolf Liebermann's *Kitsch opera semi-seria*, *Penelope*, which, musically speaking, can safely wait its turn in our next issue's *New Music* feature, when it will be analysed to shreds beyond repair.

Finally, I have asked H. C. Robbins Landon, the editor of the forthcoming Eulenburg publication of Mozart's C minor Mass, to comment upon Salzburg's well-known, but not yet well criticized, maltreatment of the work.

H. K.

H. C. Robbins Landon writes:—The yearly performance of Mozart's Mass in C minor (K.427) was, as usual, conducted by Bernhard Paumgartner. There was no sense of style, no grasp of Mozart's phrasing, no feeling for *tempo*, and no orchestral or choral discipline. The whole performance seemed improvised, which could hardly be otherwise with one full rehearsal. Musicologically, the Paumgartner "version" is a catastrophe.

\* Cf. the Editor's review of this year's Munich production of the work on p. 323.



"A Rocky Landscape" by Jacob van Ruisdael.

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Director of the department of paintings, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

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As is known, the Mass was not completed, and while it is entirely possible (indeed, advisable) to play only those sections left us by Mozart, we were given a rehash of the Schmitt version (1901), minus the spurious "*Crucifixus*"—this is by Ernst Eberlin—and the other additions to the "*Et in spiritum sanctum*"; these sections were taken from other early Mozart masses, and Paumgartner's taste, in this respect, was superior to Schmitt's. But there were drastic cuts in the "*Laudamus*" and "*Incarnatus*"; the spurious (Schmitt) flute part in the "*Credo in unum Deum*" was retained, though Mozart clearly specifies *concertante* oboe, bassoon and horn parts which really do not sound as if they needed a flute to help them; there was no timpani part at all in the "*Credo*", though the trumpet parts in the "*Et vitam*", borrowed from K.262, cry out for one. Paumgartner omitted the one brilliant reconstruction in the Schmitt score, namely, the enlargement of the chorus in the "*Sanctus*" from Mozart's sketched six (then four) parts to the eight obviously demanded by the disposition of the orchestral parts; probably Paumgartner thought he was restoring the *Urtext* by omitting half the voices. At the end, moreover, he descended to depths of tastelessness: he muted the trumpet in the last bars of the "*Angus*". (Schmitt set this to music of the "*Kyrie*", which version Paumgartner followed.) The trumpet part in question is actually the first trombone part in the *Gesamtausgabe*, and even this is spurious, for the MS. clearly shows that there are only three trombones, alto, tenor and bass. . . . But why continue? Paumgartner has been conducting the Mass for years at Salzburg, where *Festspiel* tradition is stronger than Mozart tradition.

#### CONFERENCE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR MOZART RESEARCH

THE annual conference took place from 14th to 17th August in the Mozarteum at Salzburg. Of the lectures heard, those by Karl Wörner ("On Mozart's fugal subjects"), Walter Gerstenberg ("Concerning the slow introductions in Mozart's instrumental music"), Hans Engel ("The *finali* in Mozart's operas") and Gustav Fellerer ("Mozart's religious music") seemed the most impressive, but as always in these meetings, the speakers were hampered by the fact that all their lectures were primarily designed for the printed page: this was particularly the case with Engel's brilliant analysis of the structure in Mozart's operatic finales. The Conference was, of course, mainly concerned with the new *Gesamtausgabe* of Mozart's works, which is in an advanced state of preparation. Details of this huge undertaking are not generally known in England, and it would seem appropriate to say a few words about the organization of the new edition.

The general editor is Dr. Ernst Fritz Schmid of Augsburg, a German scholar who has distinguished himself in Haydn research (he is one of the editors of the Haydn edition), as well as in Mozart and other fields. Schmid is uniquely qualified for this important position: he combines painstaking accuracy with the systematic thoroughness we have come to expect of German musicologists. He has begun a world-wide search for Mozart sources, and to this end such important collections as those in the Austrian monasteries have been investigated. It seems incredible, but no one has, up to now, examined these monasteries for their Mozart sources; new and highly valuable MS. sources of Mozart's piano concerti, with hitherto unknown *cadenzas*, have been found there. As in the Haydn edition, exact and detailed instructions for the preparation of Mozart G.A. have been issued, and we may expect a consistently high level of scholarship. The new edition is to be published in some 100-odd volumes by Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel, and the first volumes are to be printed in 1955. One is pleased to report that practical editions (*e.g.* vocal scores, orchestral parts, *etc.*) are to be issued hand in hand with the scholarly edition.

H. C. R. L.

## Bayreuth

*Parsifal*, 5th August; *Lohengrin*, 7th; *Tannhäuser*, 8th; Beethoven ninth Symphony (Furtwängler) 9th; *Rheingold*, 10th; *Walküre*, 11th

THE *Burgtheater* towers over the little town of Bayreuth, an ever-present *Wagnerdenkmal*, to some extent creating the atmosphere of the place and knocking the critical stuffing out of the populace. For many, Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner can do no wrong and even a hint of positive criticism would be regarded as dire heresy. Due, presumably, to this unhappy state of affairs, the Bayreuth productions become each year progressively more and more amateurish. The time has come to make a stand. *Tannhäuser*, this year's only new venture, will serve very well to amplify our argument.

Very few opera librettos are self-explanatory—even if one can both hear the words and understand the language, and there are still many people who believe that there is no action too improbable or too stupid in itself to find a place on the operatic stage. The true professional opera producer realizes both these facts and invariably organizes the performance with a view to making the story plain. Unfortunately Wieland Wagner too often assumes that what is, presumably, clear to him will also be equally self-evident to everyone else.

What any non-German-speaking spectator, seeing *Tannhäuser* for the first time at Bayreuth this summer, could possibly have made of it must remain a matter for uneasy conjecture. The producer's *volte-face* between the second and last act, when he abandoned his deliberately stylized procedure (which had served him and us very well for two acts) and reverted to the now over-familiar Bayreuth speciality of two characters perambulating a darkened stage and followed erratically by spotlights—this, no doubt, is what we critics will be expected primarily to explain. The writer has no reason to offer, but it may be worthwhile to reiterate the old tag that confusion of styles is one of the marks of the amateur.

Musically, as one would expect, the standard was very much better. Gré Brouwenstijn (Elisabeth) and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Wolfram) gave performances of real distinction, but one could not believe in the *Tannhäuser* of Ramon Vinay. Despite Keilberth's rejuvenating treatment the first act dragged, but the second and third aroused the enthusiasm of a workers' audience, as well they might. The orchestra sounded buoyant and responsive.

The various conflicting stories about the finance and general management of the *Burgtheater* are legion, but no verbal fabrication, however ingenious or apologetic or both, can camouflage the very obvious fact that the theatre itself is seriously in need of re-equipment, re-furnishing and re-decoration on both sides of the proscenium arch. There are to be no performances in 1955, so the Wagners have two years in which to put their house in order. Perhaps in 1956 we may see a *verismo* *Ring* cycle with the tarnhelm, toad, horse and other "inconvenient" properties restored to the stage and portrayed with at least some of the ingenuity we English expect to see, and do see in the more enterprising productions of the commercial London theatre. But we digress!

*Parsifal*, potentially one of the greatest operas, is fraught with so many difficulties in the matter of stage realization that it remains its own worst enemy. On a musically imaginative listener *Parsifal*'s first impression must inevitably be profound and almost certainly of lasting duration. This is one of many examples of the much-maligned Wagnerian magic, for increasing familiarity with the work exposes serious limitations which, curiously, one tends to disregard or at least to accept—much as experience teaches one to behave in regard to human relationships. Wagner's text, as such, does not emerge from critical examination with a great deal of credit; and no amount of amorphous theorizing, based on the *Parsifalkreuz* and whatnot, will obscure for more than a moment the sub-structure of pseudo-religious claptrap. As a literary effort the stuff is *Kitsch*; but this is also true of many librettos, including *Zauberflöte* and *Fidelio*. To overcome the general stiffness and the supreme improbability of such a libretto, production and performance

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must be conceived in terms of an *ideal* cast. If this is done, subsequent success or failure may be measured in direct proportion to the fitness or otherwise of the actual cast employed. At this Bayreuth performance Hans Hotter seriously upset the delicate balance of Wagner's overall conception, for he brought a jarring, bombastic element into the character of Amfortas—too vigorous a dramatic approach combined with a very heavy *vibrato*—an element surely entirely foreign to Wagner's portrayal of the individual character and to his idea of the character's relationship to the drama of *Parsifal* taken as a whole. Josef Greindl's interpretation of Gurnemanz was founded upon, and almost equalled that of Ludwig Weber: Gustav Neidlinger's Klingsor, a model of tonal accuracy, was less theatrical than Uhde's but quite as cogent; Martha Mödl (Kundry) and Wolfgang Windgassen (*Parsifal*) could well have been members of that ideal cast to which we have alluded and Knappertsbusch achieved a musical and dignified, if steadily decelerating interpretation of the score.

This year's *Lohengrin* was remarkable for the vast improvement of Windgassen in the title part. Compared with some of his earlier "live" performances, the magnificent Decca records have always seemed to flatter him a little, presenting the voice a shade larger than life. Windgassen has now proved that they were merely prophetic. Otherwise this was a poor performance. One has come to expect lapses in production and staging, and on this showing Wolfgang Wagner is even less successful than his brother. The crowd movements which can and should re-inforce the drama—think in particular of the arrival of the swan—were lethargic and casual, as if the producer had not been clear in his own mind either exactly what he wanted to achieve or how to do it. The lighting, too, was generally undistinguished, with promiscuous unwanted shadows. Birgit Nilsson made an accurate and appealing, if rather wooden figure of Elsa, Uhde and Varnay proved admirable exponents of Evil and Fischer-Dieskau made some lovely sounds in the small part of the herald. Theo Adam, as Heinrich, certainly lacked sufficient voice and the resultant forcing in which he indulged may have been responsible for his serious lapses in intonation. The orchestra did not reach their normal standard; there were too many slips and the brass tone was generally coarse, and the famous quintet (act I), over which one would expect endless trouble to be spent, was ragged and inaccurate. Eugen Jochum appeared to lose precise control in complicated passages and, so far as one could judge, gave little help to the singers.

*Rheingold* and *Walküre*, under Keilberth, were better musically: the former very much so. It is difficult to imagine a finer Wotan than Hotter who was at his magnificent best, and Neidlinger's Alberich is a wonderful study—a superbly sung essay in dramatic integration. Bayreuth tried yet another Loge in Rudolf Lustig who proved fully adequate but lacked the unconventional satirical charm which was such a feature of Walter Fritz in 1951. This *Rheingold* was taken at Keilberth's usual brisk pace and finely sung by a cast without a weakness. The orchestral contribution was clean and tidy, but the tone of the violins seemed thin compared with previous years. The general level of the production was moderate, with some good ideas and some that were literally incredibly bad. Worst of all—and I do not expect to be believed except by those who saw for themselves—was Alberich picking up the gauze curtain so that he could "duck" underneath it in order to reach the gold! Most amateurs would draw the line at that. On the credit side, it was a good idea to leave Loge alone on the stage at the end: but how much more effective would he have been if he had stood still.

*Walküre* was a curious mixture. Those who went for the final scene will have been more than satisfied, for Hotter and Mödl were magnificent and it emerged as one of Wagner's very greatest creations. The first scene was dreadful, for two reasons: that Varnay—fine artist though she is—cannot be cast as Sieglinde whom she cannot possibly ever begin to resemble, and Max Lorenz cannot sing the part of Siegmund. It was a performance which stood when the "blues" were on the stage and fell when they were off it; by no means good enough as a whole for the principal Wagner festival in the world.

In the midst of this Wagnerian ocean there was a performance of Beethoven's ninth Symphony with Gré Brouwenstijn, Ira Malaniuk, Wolfgang Windgassen and Ludwig

Weber, conducted by Furtwängler. Furtwängler's performance of this work is an act of faith which has been discussed in these pages many times and which, it seems, he can repeat at will with ever-varying resources but almost consistent result. I have heard him integrate the *coda* of the first movement with more world-shaking fervour, but he made the slow movement sound "all-of-a-piece"—as it so seldom does, although one knows it should.

As may be evident from these notes, the orchestra—in particular the violins—seemed to have been reduced in size this year. No official confirmation was forthcoming, but other colleagues suspected that this economy had been made.

## Munich

*Meistersinger*, 12th August; *Figaro*, 13th; *Frau ohne Schatten*, 14th; *Palestrina*, 15th; *Arabella*, 17th; *Così fan tutte*, 18th; *Rosenkavalier*, 19th; Concert, 20th

As far as one can gather from personal experience taken together with the considered opinions of respected colleagues—for none of us can claim first-hand knowledge of every opera-house—the depressing fact emerges that the really consistently first-class opera is a thing of the past; although, of course, examples have never been plentiful. Glyndebourne frequently approaches the ideal but it cannot be described as a permanent institution, while of the permanent houses Munich has recently earned for itself European leadership.

If the directorate can drastically reduce the tolerances at present allowed in their poorer performances (*e.g.* *Figaro*, *Così* and *Rosenkavalier*) and concentrate upon maintaining the artistic level set by this *Meistersinger*, *Frau ohne Schatten*, *Palestrina* and *Arabella*, they will then establish a first-class permanent opera, which is one of the civilized European's prime unsatisfied needs. It is not easy to form a just appraisal in eight congested days; but if this period may be taken as representative, a very striking fact emerged: that Munich eschews all half-measures, its opera is either very good or very bad. *Figaro* and *Così*, considered as wholes (although both were cut, the latter quite senselessly), would have done no credit to Sadler's Wells, nor would this *Rosenkavalier* have cut much ice at Covent Garden.

The two Mozart operas were given in the Theater am Gärtnerplatz, *Figaro* conducted by Jochum and *Così* by Heger. Apart from Annelies Kupper who, on this showing, is a poor Mozart singer and uncertain in pitch, the cast of the latter gave us a performance "in the spirit of Mozart" so far as it went, including in Karl Schmitt-Walter and Hertha Töpfer a Guglielmo and Dorabella of genuine distinction. The score was however drastically cut—*e.g.* both Dorabella's *arias* were omitted—and the natural balance of the piece was lost. (A good deal of *Così* could be cut, to the opera's ultimate advantage, but not as was done in this production.)

For the *Figaro* there is very little to be said. It sounds terrible in German, of course, but one must make allowance for that just as one tries to put up with it in English at Covent Garden. Karl Schmitt-Walter's Almaviva and Hertha Töpfer's Cherubino provided all that was best in the performance. Annelies Kupper played the Countess without distinction, Elisabeth Lindermeier was plainly miscast as Susanna and for once, as *Figaro*, Hermann Uhde ambled through his part as if bored stiff with the whole proceedings: perhaps he was. Most of the blame for a dreary evening must be laid to Jochum's lack of drive in the pit; he seldom kept a tight hold on the music and the true Mozartian sparkle was correspondingly seldom generated.

The five remaining operas were given in the Prinzregententheater. *Rosenkavalier* suffered from two principal and disabling shortcomings; one in common with all *Rosenkavaliers* of to-day—a weak performance of the *Marschallin*—and the other, most unexpected, slovenly orchestral playing under Keilberth. This was the more unfortunate as Kurt Böhme (Ochs), Hertha Töpfer (Octavian), Benno Kusche (Faninal) and Paul Kuen (Valzacchi) could well have formed the foundation of something much better.

We are now left with *Meistersinger* under Knappertsbusch, *Palestrina* under Heger and *Frau ohne Schatten* and *Arabella* both directed by Rudolf Kempe. Any one of these, by itself, would have been worth the journey across Europe.

This was the best *Meistersinger* I have seen. It was also the only complete performance in which the last scene did not become a bore. After the somewhat painful stage efforts at Bayreuth it was a joy to see Heinz Arnold's thoroughly professional production—precise, sure-footed and beautifully lit from first to last—and to know instinctively during the opening hymn that nothing was likely to go wrong! Ferdinand Frantz (Sachs), Kurt Böhme (Pogner), Benno Kusche (Beckmesser), Hans Hermann Nissen (Kothner), Hans Hopf (Stolzing), Richard Holm (David), Maud Cunitz (Eva) and Ira Maianiuk (Magdalena) formed the fine basis of a cast which obviously knew and equally evidently enjoyed its work. It is true, as we have heard at Covent Garden, that Frantz' voice lacks the heroic ring, but the loss was made up in other ways—much as Martinelli used to camouflage his vocal deficiencies when he was no longer young. Nissen too, we may be sure, would have dealt more peremptorily with the difficulties of Kothner's "tablatur" in years gone by, but he still managed it better than most. Fundamentally, however, any performance of *Meistersinger*—once we grant a fair minimum standard—stands or falls by the conductor's handling of the score; Keller has written on another page of the remarkable change he finds in Knappertsbusch over the years: entirely independently, and not over so many years either, I was struck by similar evidence of artistic development in his masterly exposition of *Meistersinger*. At the risk of labouring what may be obvious, this is an enormous score, both in time and in part in complexity; there may be comparatively many of us who can "remember" the whole of it, and those of us who can should be able to realize how great a feat it is to re-create the whole in actual performance and set it before the public once again with all its pristine vigour, humanity and enchantment. This was precisely Knappertsbusch's achievement.

If you confess to boredom with the Council of Trent and also set comparatively little store by owning a shadow, it is unlikely that either Pfitzner's *Palestrina* or Strauss' *Frau ohne Schatten* would whet your immediate curiosity. It is true that neither work makes a musico-dramatic whole, consistently satisfying in itself, as do, for instance, Gluck's *Alceste*, *Tosca*, *Salome* and even *Wozzeck*. But many examples can be cited to show that operas do not have to make any such thing—*Don Giovanni*, *Zauberflöte*, *Fidelio*, *Boris Godounov* in the realm of masterpieces alone—and the fact remains that *Palestrina* and *Frau ohne Schatten* are two of the most interesting operas on the fringe of the general repertoire. It may be a current musical fashion to decry everything "interesting" as if it were therefore immediately damned: that is merely a shallow perversion of meaning. *Palestrina* certainly has more than merely "interest"; the first act and the last scene are the work of a musical genius of a very high order. Pfitzner was one of that very rare band of modern composers who combine creative imagination with a refinement of craftsmanship that emerges the more clearly as one's familiarity with the man and his idiom, or mode of thought, increases. It would be death to Pfitzner's music in England, supposing it had ever been born, for us to stage *Palestrina* here without due care and attention. But if Covent Garden would make the effort, what a revelation our public would have. Finally, two matters of detail: the name part was taken this year by Lorenz Fehenberger who clearly modelled himself on Patzak and did the music and himself considerable credit, and the little technical matter of the open window which we commented on last year has now been rectified.

*Frau ohne Schatten* runs for more than three hours. It calls for first-class production, good singers, fine playing, a conductor of genius and elaborate sets designed for rapid and repeated flying. All were present and the result was most impressive. Like all the Strauss-Hofmannsthal products, it never falls below the level of good theatre; but there are long stretches where I suspect that uninspired production would fail to make this apparent. Even in a brief notice of this kind special mention must be made of Josef Metternich's fine performance as Barak and of Rudolf Kempe's masterly interpretation of the long and complex score.



The company's brilliant production of *Arabella* has altered little from what they gave us in London last year. Perhaps in the Prinzregententheater there was a slight extra edge to the brilliance, and certainly it is an improvement to play the opera in two sections only, with an interval after act one.

As a precaution against a possible surfeit of opera, an occasional orchestral evening had been planned, and at the first of these Kempe conducted the opera orchestra in Werner Egk's French Suite, four movements of Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* (with Gerhard Taschner) and Schumann's fourth Symphony. The Egk was what I think Scott Goddard would describe as (very) occasional musick; the Lalo is frankly rubbish, though it was beautifully played and showed Taschner to be a virtuoso of the front rank and, finally, the Schumann was given a thoughtful and carefully rehearsed performance of which the composer might have been proud.

### THE VIENNA OPERA AT WATERLOO

*Don Giovanni*, 14th and *Figaro*, 16th September

THE merits of the Royal Festival Hall are great but it was never intended to serve as an opera house, nor can it be made to do so save as a makeshift encumbered with insuperable snags. The stage is too shallow to permit any serious attempt at realistic setting, while its enormous width "spreads" the tone of the orchestra and presents an impossible problem to the conductor—that of securing a taut ensemble with his forces consistently deployed beyond the physical limits of sustained and precise control. In addition the improvised hangings have an unwelcome damping effect on the acoustic response of the auditorium.

The result was that both performances seemed incredibly slack, lackadaisical and at times positively tedious; as if our distinguished visitors had taken quick stock of the ignorant, but enthusiastic South Bank public and had decided that the audience did not merit their fullest exertions. One prefers to believe that this is untrue, but there were many shortcomings which could not be blamed upon the Hall.

Many words have been spent in attempts to define true Mozartian style, but its succinct perfection seems always to evade being captured in prose, though the style itself is sometimes manifest in performance—as it was this summer in *Don Giovanni* at Glyndebourne. Precision is half the answer, while scrupulous avoidance of the common is equally fundamental. We have suggested that the Hall must bear some responsibility for the frequently flabby ensemble, but the occasional tasteless exhibitions of thoroughly common behaviour paid repellent tribute to one of the less attractive characteristics of the present age and are a pseudo-paradoxical anachronism which must be eradicated.

Even when full allowance has been made for the generally unsatisfactory conditions under which our visitors had to work—and one must hope for their speedy return to Covent Garden—it must be said that this opera fell far short of the much-publicized Viennese tradition of excellence. The stage sets, which one could not dignify by the description of "scenery", seemed irrefutable evidence of a hasty compromise with the admittedly depressing stage limitations; but no, we have since been assured that what we saw were close reproductions of the stuff that is used in Vienna! In this case *Tradition ist Schlamperei* indeed.

If the ceremonial re-opening in Vienna is to fulfil expectations much sustained hard work will be required of the company during the next twelve months. It is clear that a very high standard *could* be reached, for the talent available is remarkable for quantity and in some individual cases for quality also. But one looks in vain for any sign of a dominant integrating personality either behind the scene or in the orchestra pit.

The prime weakness of this *Don Giovanni* was Erich Kunz' grossly overplayed Leporello. True, he provided vigorous contrast to George London's subtly aristocratic Don, but it was contrast of a common and jarring kind with none of the ebullient natural comedy for which one hopes, and has seen from Kusche and Baccaloni. The second part of the "Catalogue" *aria*—the audience having emphasized the break with vociferous applause—provides the acid test for Leporello's tact and for Elvira's patience, and the utter absence of the former must have tried the latter to the limit. Ludwig Weber made an



impressive figure of the Commendatore, but ran into trouble with his trombones in the cemetery and Elisabeth Grümmer made an unusually telling study of Donna Anna until she floundered, as so many singers do, in the *coloratura* passages of her principal scene with Don Ottavio. Leopold Simoneau made light of both Ottavio's *arias* which he sang beautifully, while Rita Streich missed most of the inherent charm of Zerlina and Walter Berry rightly brought out the discontent of Masetto who is too often portrayed as a good-natured fool. Karl Böhm conducted a performance of very variable musical quality.

The *Figaro*, conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser, showed a largely similar lack of basic integration—one felt that Almaviva (Alfred Poell) and Rosina (Lisa della Casa) were meeting on the stage for the first time, so that any possibility of their having grown tired of each other stretched human credulity too far. Streich's Susanna, Murray Dickie's Basilio and Oskar Czerwenka's Bartolo all displayed a captivating blend of subtlety and comedy, but Berry made too inexperienced a Figaro and Dagmar Herrmann seemed uncomfortable and therefore unconvincing as Cherubino. The small parts were adequately filled and Hollreiser's interpretation alternately sparkled and flagged, for no reason that was apparent, unless to indicate his varying degrees of enthusiasm for the different numbers of the score.

G. N. S.

## Gramophone Records

### Bach: *A Recital of Arias*.\*

K. Ferrier and London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Boult.

Decca LW 5083.

### Mozart: *Notturmos: Mi lagnero tacendo*, K.437,

*Di pupille amabili*, K.439 and *Piu non trovano*, K.549.

E. Scheepers, M. Sinclair and Geraint Evans with

London Baroque Ensemble, c. Haas.

Parlophone R 20622.

*Arias: Chi sa, chi sa, qual sia*, K.582\* and*Vado, ma dove?* K.583.

I. Seefried with London Mozart Players, c. Blech.

Columbia LX 1596.

### Dørumsgaard: *Canzone Scordate*.\*

Gerard Souzay, acc. J. Bonneau.

Decca LXT 2835.

Here are riches; unusual and unexpected riches. Kathleen Ferrier sings "Grief for Sin" and "All is fulfilled" from the *St. Matthew* and *St. John* Passions respectively and "Qui sedes" and "Agnus Dei" from the B Minor Mass. These are performances of almost unbearable poignancy and beauty; Ferrier's voice brings the listener immediately close to Bach's meaning. All the Mozart songs are delightfully done; in the baroque pieces, ensemble singing and wind playing are alike in restrained and accurate performance but the voices grate at *mf* and louder; this is an engineering let-down for a first-rate artistic effort. The Seefried record is free of any fault.

Whatever one may think about "realizations" of early music, one has to accept that Dørumsgaard has provided material for a most attractive anthology of pre-classical songs. The collection includes seven anonymous Italian songs and four German sacred songs, mostly of early seventeenth-century origin, five songs by Alessandro Scarlatti and three by C. P. E. Bach. The accompaniments are for piano and in them the composer has tried to combine a feeling for period, an understanding of the original composer's essential style and a modern keyboard playing technique. Not all are equally successful, but even those which are plainly lifted out of style and period by Dørumsgaard's pianistics succeed in appearing sincere. A good example of this is the middle one of the Bach songs, a melody which might have been written by Schubert: the accompaniment provided is Schubert to all intents, most cleverly invoked on the piano. Alessandro's lovely tunes get Domenico-style accompaniments of an engaging accuracy of period. But undoubtedly the best settings are those of the early Italian monodies: here the realizations reveal originality as

\* Strongly recommended.

well as insight and mere tunes become interesting songs. A carol in the German set ("Ein Kindlein in der Wiegen") is perhaps the loveliest single item and is most beautifully sung by Souzay, who manages excellently the stylistic adventures involved in the set as a whole.

*Beethoven: Symphony no. 4 in B flat, op. 60.*

L'Orchestre Symphonique de la Radio Belge, c. André. Telefunken LGX 66010.

*Schumann: Symphony no. 1 in B flat, op. 38.*

The Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, c. Keilberth. Telefunken LGM 65010.

*Berlioz: Symphonie Funebre et Triomphale.*

Great Symphonic Brass Orchestra of Cologne, String Orchestra of Cologne, Cologne Choir, c. Straub. Nixa LLP 8040.

*Brahms: Symphony no. 1 in C minor, op. 68.*

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Keilberth. Telefunken LGX 66003.

*Dvořák: Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 95.*

The Hamburg Radio Symphony Orchestra, c. Schmidt-Isserstedt. Telefunken LGX 66007.

*Symphony no. 6 in D, op. 60.*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Sejna. Supraphon H 23688-92.

*Mahler: Symphony no. 1 in D ("Titan").\**

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, c. Steinberg. Capitol CTL 7042.

Franz André takes the fourth Symphony the way so many of his contemporaries have already misguidedly explored. Beethoven put fun and warmth into this work as into no other: what we get is drama and heat. It is required that a conductor of gifts should come to this Symphony never having heard it before, and *read* Beethoven's simple score. Since that cannot happen the reader is advised to stick to whatever recorded performance he has been able to live with—not this one. The Schumann Symphony, with a magically performed last movement, is recorded with a marked and unpleasant lack of instrumental definition. The Berlioz work, intensely interesting and well performed, is not perfectly recorded; but the forces used are huge and all things considered, it is acceptable as a record. As a work, musicians, from Wagner to Hamilton Harty, have always acclaimed it, the former having the good fortune to hear it as written and as Berlioz originally intended it should be heard. Very largely because French regimental bands took all of Berlioz' lifetime to settle down to a prescribed instrumental make-up, he himself never re-scored the work in final form and the number of horns, bassoons and oboes called for in the original can never be got together in one locality. However, the 135 instrumentalists plus choir and solo trombone (Helmut Schmitt plays gorgeously) in this recording, put up a fair show: from the aural evidence it is doubtful if the remaining 73 instrumentalists called for in the score could ever be got on to any record. Keilberth and the Berlin Philharmonic provide a dynamic Brahms no. 1, which should be heard before buying any other LP version; the recording lacks clarity of detail in places, but is very good on the whole.

The numbering of Dvořák's symphonies on these present labels (no. 5 is op. 95 and no. 6 is op. 60) makes nonsense. The order of composition is as follows:

No. 1	C minor	}	c. 1865 Unpublished.
No. 2	B flat		
No. 3	E flat	}	Published
No. 4	D minor		
No. 5	F major	}	1873 } posthumously.
No. 6	D major		
No. 7	D minor		1874 } posthumously.
No. 8	G minor		1875, op. 24—renumbered op. 76 in 1888.
No. 9	E minor		1880, op. 60.
			1885, op. 70.
			1889, op. 88.
			1893, op. 95.

\* Strongly recommended.

Both the *New World* and op. 60 (Supraphon SP) are played well and recorded indifferently; neither can be recommended, though the Czech Philharmonic performance is so brilliant that SP collectors will probably overlook the not too serious technical shortcomings. Dvořák's D major Symphony is a splendid work; that it should have become so completely overshadowed by the G minor and E minor symphonies is one of the bigger mysteries of popular taste.

Mahler's first Symphony is starred for a combination of truly superb playing by the Pittsburgh Orchestra and outstandingly fine recording. The work itself may be dealt with summarily. True Mahlerites *must* buy the record for the qualities given; those of us who admire Mahler, get bored with him at his worst, and delight in him at his best, will prefer not to be mildly bored.

J. B.

## RICHARD STRAUSS

*Vier letzte Lieder.*

Lisa della Casa.

*Duets from Arabella.*

Lisa della Casa, Hilde Güden and Alfred Poell, with Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Böhm and Moralt.

Decca LXT 2865.\*

(Vier letzte Lieder obtainable separately on Decca LW 5056, the *Arabella* duets on Decca LW 5029.)*Vier letzte Lieder and Capriccio, closing scene.*

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf with Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Ackermann.

Columbia 33 CX 1107.

For *Vier letzte Lieder* and the *Arabella* duets the choice is clear, simple and obvious: LXT 2865. The ten-inch Deccas are presumably intended to cater for those who want only one side of 2865; this they do tolerably well, but they are not as cleanly recorded as is the twelve-inch. The Columbia record will be valued chiefly for the very fine scene from *Capriccio*—*echt*—Strauss and the core of the work—but, time and again, the fine artists engaged by the E.M.I. group are let down by engineering which simply is not good enough—as Schwarzkopf is here. This sounds like a reasonably good gramophone record. The best records sound like music.

G. N. S.

## OVERTURES

*Berlioz: Benvenuto Cellini and Le Corsaire.*

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, c. Münch.

Decca LW 5014.

*Gluck: Iphigenia in Aulis and Alceste.*

London Symphony Orchestra, c. Kisch.

Decca LW 5022.

*Rossini: La Scala di Seta and La Gazza Ladra.*

Concertgebouw Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca LW 5017.

None of these discs offers a really first-rate performance. The orchestral playing in both the Berlioz works is not well polished, and both the recordings deteriorate badly in quality when approaching their respective centres. Münch fails to give a coherent account of either overture's form. The Gluck overtures are very drably done. The orchestra is not in good shape, the recording only fair (it worsens, once again, towards centre), and Mr. Kisch's transitions from one *tempo* to another are not successful; indeed, they barely exist. Van Beinum's Rossini coupling is, of course, very competent, reputable, reliable and excellently recorded; on the other hand, his interpretations are stolid and solid and scarcely catch that nervous, highly-strung, jittery intensity which is so characteristic of Rossini's genius. For poise and rapier wit I do not know a recent record of *La Scala di Seta* which is the equal of Beecham's old Columbia SP.

\* Strongly recommended.

*Johann Strauss: Polkas.* (a) *Stadt und Land*; (b) *Auf der Jagd*; (c) *Im Krappfenwald'l*; (d) *Pizzicato*; (e) *Vergnügungszug*.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Krauss.

Decca LW 5052.

*Various: Viennese "Heurigen" Songs.\**

Patzak with The Schrammel Quartet.

Decca LX 3122.

These two items seem to hang together. The Strauss Polkas are very neatly played and decently recorded; perhaps, however, Krauss' tidy beat does something to reduce their natural high spirits, for the pieces strike my ears as rather conventional hopping about. Not even the noises on and off, the cuckoo "*Im Krappfenwald'l*" and the sawn-off shot-gun "*Auf der Jagd*", succeed in keeping one fully awake. One has to remind oneself to keep on enjoying the fun. Patzak sings popular Viennese songs (some of them awful) with as much care as he lavishes upon Florestan's act two *scena*. When a good tune coincides with his artistry, the result is pretty overwhelming. Singers, especially snobby ones, should study this little disc; Patzak's phrasing, throughout, is superb. Too good, one fears, for anything to be learnt from it. Perfection always was a barren teacher.

*Mendelssohn: Prelude and Fugue in E minor, op. 35, no. 1; Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* (arr. Liszt); *Scherzo in E minor, op. 16, no. 2; Rondo Capriccioso in E major, op. 14.\**

*Liszt: Mephisto Waltz no. 1.*

*Funérailles (Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses no. 7).\**

Julius Katchen.

Decca LXT 2838.

*Schumann: Davidsbündlertänze, op. 6. Drei Fantasiestücke, op. 12.*

Adelina de Lara.

Apollo AdLP 1.

Mr. Katchen is a most impressive pianist. He knocks off his Liszt recital with a never flagging technical brilliance that commands one's admiration. The only defect is the dry tone of the piano; the recording, one suspects, caught the technique but for some reason damped down the incisive instrumental tone which doubtless went with it. The Mendelssohn anthology is no less felicitously done. The Fugue has its feeble moments, but is formally interesting (slow, quick (the subject inverted), culmination in a quasi-chorale (weak), coda on slow first section) while stylistically there can be little doubt that the piece left its chromatic mark on Max Reger. The *Rondo Capriccioso* is a most beautiful work (is its quotation of the finale of Beethoven's G major piano Concerto deliberate?), and it neatly rounds off this side of the record in what, I suppose, might be called the tonic major. Madame de Lara's record is of no little significance as an historical document (the pianist was a pupil of Fanny Davies). The recording is quite adequate.

*Schubert: Sonata in A minor ("Arpeggione").\**

*Schumann: Fantasiestücke, op. 73. Drei Romanzen, op. 94.*

Maurice Gendron (cello) and Jean Françaix (piano).

Decca LXT 2857.

The Schubert Sonata is not a major work, but it is a very charming one. Gendron and Françaix (presumably the composer) offer a splendid performance deserving of the highest praise; in particular, the cellist's phrasing and intonation are remarkable. He even scales his tone down in order to keep his style within the emotional range of the music; a sign of rare musicality. How full his tone can be is well displayed in the Schumann pieces which will take a rich bloom. They are not, however, of much musical interest. The best efforts of a fine duo cannot do a composer's composing for him, however hard they try.

*Beethoven: Mass in C major, op. 86.*

Soloists, Akademie Kammerchor, with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Moralt.

Vox PL 6300.

\* Strongly recommended.

A mercilessly routine performance with second-rank soloists and conductor. The tenor (A. Planyavsky) and bass (W. Berry) are a little more than adequate; not so the soprano and contralto. The recording is fair.

*Liszt: Dante Symphony (1856).\**

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra (with female chorus), c. Alfred Wallenstein.  
Brunswick AXTL 1034.

This is a brilliant recording of an intense performance. There can be no doubt that the dissonances one encounters at the first movement's (*Inferno*'s) beginning, the deeply expressive *fugato* in the second movement (*Purgatorio*), with a subject prophetic in angular shape and structure, the modal inflections in the female chorus' concluding *Magnificat*, the asymmetry of the rhythmic schemes in the first movement's reprise, the chromatic harmony which depicts the nostalgic memories of Paolo and Francesca, the virtuoso handling of the orchestra, and the whole work's curious emotional content, have all vitally contributed to the music of this century. Liszt, it seems to me, was a genius, yet not a great composer and often a very bad one. Genius, however, is uppermost in this highly original, eccentric and haunting piece; even the bad composition (of which there are substantial stretches) is triumphantly overcome or literally transfigured.

D. M.

*Schubert: Gretchen am Spinnrade: Die junge Nonne; An die Musik; Der Musensohn; and Schumann: Volksliedchen; Widmung.\**

Kathleen Ferrier and Phyllis Spurr.

Decca LW 5098.

The four Schubert songs were all included in Schwarzkopf's recent wonderful recital, and the beauty of Ferrier's singing is such that there is no point in comparing interpretations as between the two. But the question does arise which voice suits the chosen songs; soprano or contralto? I think *Gretchen* and *Junge Nonne* are soprano songs, and the purer the soprano the better; it is the voice of youth. *An die Musik* is contralto; it needs the overtones of experience. Whatever can be said of *Musensohn* it was certainly Kathleen Ferrier's song; she gets every breath of pique and gaiety out of it. Her singing of Schumann's masterpiece, *Widmung*, is almost unbearably touching. Miss Spurr plays admirably, and although the recording could be improved with regard to piano tone, the issue is too precious to miss.

*Bach: Mass in B minor.*

Schwarzkopf (S.), Hoffgen (A.), Gedda (T.), Rehfuss (B.), with Chorus and Orchestra of The Society of the Friends of Music, c. Karajan.

Columbia 33 CX 1121-3.\*

Guillaume (S), Plümacher (A.), Hofmann (T.), Günter (B.), with Swabian Choral Singers and Pro Musica Orchestra, Stuttgart, c. Grischkat.

Vox PL 8063/1-3.

*St. John Passion.*

Weber, Plate, Hess, Gummer with Kontorei Der Dreikönigskirche Frankfurt and Collegium Musicum Orchestra, c. Thomas.

L'Oiseau-Lyre OL 50023-5.

*Christmas Oratorio.*

Soloists, Choir and Orchestra of The Detmold Academy of Music, with the Collegium Pro Arte, c. Thomas.

L'Oiseau-Lyre OL 50001-3.

*Bruckner: Great Mass no. 3 in F minor.\**

Siebert, Herrmann, Majkut, Wiener with Akademie Kammerchor and Philharmonic Orchestra of Vienna, c. Grossmann.

Vox PL 7940.

In both issues of the B minor Mass there are many good things and some that are perfect. Imperfections, of one kind or another, there must be in a work as massive and as shot through with vital detail as this. Comparative criticism is, therefore, a matter

\* Strongly recommended.



of weighing a great number of diverse performance qualities against each other. There is no doubt that the Columbia issue comes out the winner. It is the better technical achievement, in any case. Points which weigh heavily in deciding that it is also the better performance are: *Soloists*: Better on Columbia, especially the tenor who, on Vox, has too small a voice for the orchestra. *Choir*: Columbia cleaner in line and in attack. Vox often more colourful. *Instrumental soloists*: Dennis Brain and Gareth Morris give Columbia a margin of excellence over their opposite numbers. The soloist standard in both is very high and solo violins are of an equal excellence. *Orchestra*: Both good with Vox providing more detail and colour and Columbia greater restraint. *Ensemble*: The balance of orchestra and chorus better on Columbia, but occasional moments on Vox are more thrilling because less restrained. All this should not be allowed to present the Stuttgart-Vox performance as in any way poor: it is very good indeed. The safest thing for buyers might be to test both performances; for that purpose we advise, as key passages: *Sanctus and Osanna* (Chorus: choral-orchestral balance), *Domine Deus* (Solo flute, violin, soprano and tenor). *Quoniam* (Solo horn, bassoons and bass singer), *Cum sancto Spiritu* (Orchestra: instrumental definition: overall balance). One great advantage of the Vox records is that the titled sections are on separate bands. One cannot find one's way to pick a number on any given side of the Columbia records.

The *St. John Passion* is excellently performed: a consistent wooden tone, in upper vocal registers especially, suggests recording difficulties and in spite of some very beautiful moments the issue cannot be recommended. As a test for the fault indicated, almost any soprano passage with chorus will do: for the excellence of performance and style, the Chorale, *Petrus der nicht denkt zurück* might well persuade any buyer against my overall judgment. The *Christmas Oratorio* is of better all-round quality: it would have earned a star were it not that the tenor part has been given to an unsatisfactory voice. All else is lovely and the quality of recording beyond praise.

Bruckner's greatest work includes much of his church music, notably the three Masses in D minor, E minor, and F minor, the *Te Deum* and his setting of *Psalm 150*. Listening to this recording of the third Mass we are, of course, in a very different world from Bach's. In spite of the religious roots, from which spring almost all of Bruckner's symphonic and choral works, his Mass is scarcely suggestive of the liturgy. The arch exponent of a simple faith expressed in sound of a complex grandeur has, quite simply, overdone it. All his symphonic devices are there: woodwind arabesques above a solo; romantic, singing cellos following the line of alto and bass voices, note by note; flashes of upper brass illuminating tenor and soprano, where their telling phrases come. Much of what I am trying to say would be spotted most readily in the *Sanctus*, which is very reminiscent indeed of the *Venusberg* music! A glorious performance, with singing attack of utter precision and orchestral playing of great tension, does uncommon credit to Grossmann as conductor. The recording is first rate. The quartet with chorus which opens the *Benedictus* is the most beautifully managed vocal ensemble we have heard in a long time. It alone would earn the star I unhesitatingly award this unusually fine issue.

*Wagner: Tannhäuser—Elisabeth's Greeting and The Flying Dutchman—Senta's Ballad.*

M. Cunitz, Chorus and Orchestra of the Städtische Oper, Berlin, c. Rother.

Telefunken TM 68001.

*Verdi: Macbeth: Dieser Flecken kommt immer wieder: and Nun sinkt der Abend, and Don Carlos: Verhängnisvoll war dies Geschenk, and*

*Gluck: Ach ich habe sie verloren.*

M. Mödl and Orchestra of the Städtische Oper, Berlin, c. Lowlein.

Telefunken TM 68009.

*Verdi: Don Carlos: Ella giammai m'amo.*

Arie and L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Erede, and

*Moussorgsky: The Death of Boris.*

Arie with chorus and the London Symphony Orchestra, c. Krips. Decca LW 5079.



*Verdi: Un Ballo in Maschera: Ma dall arido stelo divulsa: Morro, ma prima in grazia\** and *Tchaikovsky: Queen of Spades: Ich muss am Fenster lehnen: Es geht auf Mitternacht.*

Ljuba Welitsch and Vienna State Opera, c. Moralt. Decca LW 5050.

*Humperdinck: Hansel and Gretel; Complete Opera.*

E. Schwarzkopf, E. Grümmer, M. von Ilosvay, E. Schurhoff, and J. Metternich with  
Choirs of Loughton High and Bancroft's Schools and Philharmonia Orches-  
tra, c. Karajan. Columbia 33 CX 1096-7.

The Wagner record is not good enough to replace the several good SP issues of these two famous *arias*. On the *Tannhäuser* side Cunitz' voice is raspily recorded and she shouts the top notes in Senta's ballad. The Verdi-Gluck coupling is also poor; recording standards are fairly low and the quality of Mödl's voice depends too much on which part of the gamut she is singing in. Arie disappoints a little in *Boris*; his rendering lacks dramatic overtones; the singing is too pure. But he more than makes up on the Verdi side to match an excellently engineered record with a first-rate performance. Welitsch is in great form for her Verdi and Tchaikovsky *arias*. This is one of her very best recordings and is splendidly turned out.

Humperdinck's opera is so simple in vocal execution that it can easily be made to sound good and one's critical faculties always nod to its sleepy enchantment. The voices of Schwarzkopf and Grümmer are lovely and the whole performance goes smoothly in a musical sense. But it is very difficult to get the feel of listening to a live opera; perhaps that is because of the low dramatic intensity of the score, and could not be helped.

*Couperin: Troisième Concert Royal, and La Steinquerque.*

Isabelle Nef and Ruggero Gerlin. London OL 50031.

*Bach: Fantasia and Fugue in G minor and Toccata and Fugue in D minor.*

Jeanne Demessieux. Decca LW 5095.

*Fugue in A minor.\**

*Fantasia and Fugue in G minor ("Great") and Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in G.*  
Albert Schweitzer. Columbia 33 CX 1074.

*Mozart: Clarinet Quintet in A, K. 581.*

Fine Arts Quartet with Reginald Kell. Brunswick AXTL 1074.

Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet with Leopold Wlach. Nixa WLP 5112.

*Brahms: Clarinet Quintet in B minor, op. 115.\**

Fine Arts Quartet with Reginald Kell. Brunswick AXTL 1008.

*Sonatas for clarinet and piano, op. 120.*

*no. 1 in F minor, no. 2 in E flat.*

Jacques Lancelot and Anni d'Arco. London OL 50030.

*Liszt: Liebestraum no. 3 and La Campanella, and*

*Nielsen: Chaconne, op. 32.*

France Ellegaard. Decca LW 5051.

*Villa-Lobos: Piano Music: Pobre Cega.\**

*O Pintor de Cannahy. Choros no. 5.*

*Impressoes seresteiras. A mare encheu.*

*Passa, passa, gaviás.*

Ellen Ballon. Decca LW 5081.

The *obligato* of clickings and rumbles from one or both of the instruments used in the Couperin record reaches a pitch of irritation scarcely salved by the charm of the music. It must be said that some movements of the long *Concert Royale* suite are of dull construction, just as some are of true coin. The record is bound to appeal to students of the

\* Strongly recommended.

period, as it should. It will, with its brilliant playing, delight also the queer modern school of harpsichord fanciers to whom anything written for the instrument is manna.

Albert Schweitzer's playing of Bach has greatness. Behind the sweep of registration and power of execution are the authority of one of the greatest Bach students of our time, and the heart of a great practical humanist. These qualities stand out in a recording that has no more than very minor technical faults. Whilst not in this class, the playing of Jeanne Demessieux is matched to the beauties of the Geneva Victoria Hall organ, a truly fine instrument which should be used for more recordings. Her playing of the G minor and D minor fugues will satisfy most organ lovers; the record is beautifully engineered.

Choice between the two Mozart performances is difficult. The Vienna strings produce a richer texture and their first movement is the better. They play the *larghetto* too slowly, and are too deliberate in the minuet. Wlach's clarinet is the more sonorous, Kell's is purer and bell-like. All play very well indeed and the recordings are good. So is the Brahms Quintet recording. Here the Vienna players give a perfect performance except that the rich string tone is a shade too heavy for the clarinet in one or two *chalumneau* passages. Of the four works inspired by the clarinetist Mühlfeld, this heavenly Quintet is in a class by itself, a fact which comes home on hearing the *opus* 120 sonatas. No. 1 is the better work; the main weakness of no. 2 is the final set of variations, where Brahms, of all people, chooses an unlikely tune and fails to do anything very enterprising with it. Both works are impeccably performed on a record slightly marred by some shrill-sounding upper clarinet notes. Decca's curious coupling of Liszt and Nielsen serves to show off France Ellegaard's technical range; the playing is impressive. It is a pity that Liszt's two most hackneyed salon pieces have been used, because Nielsen's well constructed and highly pianistic work is interesting enough to recommend and the record is well made. Ellen Ballon is acknowledged in the Americas as the leading performer of Villa-Lobos' piano music, and she has made a beautiful recording of a sensible selection of his pieces. We meet here most aspects of the Brazilian composer's style and some of his best work, which, Schumann-like, has often gone into his shortest instrumental pieces.

Bach: *Violin Concerto in E\** and

Haydn: *Violin Concerto in C*.

Goldberg and Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Süsskind.

Parlophone PMA 1007.

Paisiello: *Harpsichord Concerto in C*,

Durante: *Harpsichord Concerto in B flat*,

Auletta: *Harpsichord Concerto in G*, and

Mancini: *Concerto à Quattro in E minor*.

Ruggero Gerlin with Ensemble Orchestral de L'Oiseau-Lyre, c. de Froment.

London OL 50009.

Pleyel: *Fifth Concertante Symphony*.

Ensemble Instrumental de Paris, c. de Froment, and

Dittersdorf: *Three Partitas*.

The French Wind Quintet.

London OL 50014.

Mozart: *Concerto in C for flute and harp*, K.229 and *Concerto, no 1 in G for flute*, K.313.

W. Glass, R. Stein and South German Chamber Orchestra, c. Reinhardt.

Telefunken LGX 66019.

*Sinfonia concertante in E flat*, K.364.\*

Stern, Primrose and the Perpignan Festival Orchestra, c. Casals.

Columbia 33 CX 1039.

*Concerto no. 5 in A ("Turkish") for violin*, and

Bruch: *Concerto no. 1 in G minor*, op. 26.

Heifetz and the London Symphony Orchestra, c. Sargent.

His Master's Voice ALP 1124.

\* Strongly recommended.

Schumann: *Concerto in A minor, op. 54 for piano*.\*

M. Hess and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Schwarz.

His Master's Voice BLP 1039.

Brahms: *Concerto in D, op. 77, for violin*.

de Vito and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Schwarz.

His Master's Voice ALP 1104.

Khatchaturian: *Concerto for violin and orchestra*.

Igor Oistrakh and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Goossens. Columbia 33 CX 1141.

It is not fair to star the Brahms issue because the recording frequently degenerates into coarseness; de Vito's playing is magnificent and Schwarz' hold on the work most compelling. Igor Oistrakh is in a class occupied by very few violinists (which same includes his father, David). Here, he plays, with breath-taking technique, in a work which, though skilfully laid out, is built round material of a very slight and obvious character. The elegiac slow movement only, a Rimsky-like tune, is memorable. Columbia make a specially good job of the recording.

Goldberg's playing of the Bach Concerto is a fine combination of imagination and restraint; the Haydn work, in which there is, for once, a harpsichord *continuo* which does its job according to Haydn, is equally well performed and the recording is adequate. The record of Paisiello (1740-1816), Durante (1684-1755), Auletta (1698-1771) and Mancini (1679-1739) is labelled "Four Concertos of the Neapolitan School". Paisiello's Concerto reveals some of the reasons why he could not hold a candle to Mozart: the work, happily scored and nicely put together, ends with a tinkling rondo made up of tunes the master would easily have got away with; Paisiello does not. Durante's work is sweetly monotonous. Mancini might have been a lesser relative of Bach's. The piece that makes the record is Auletta's. He is a highly original composer and his Concerto a long and well sustained work, with Mozartian balance and Gluck-like tunes. All these pieces are still in MS. at the Naples Conservatoire Library.

The Pleyel *Concertante* has much felicitous writing for a group of flute, oboe, horn and bassoon, set off against a string orchestra carrying also paired clarinets and horns. But the simpler Dittersdorf pieces appeal as more soundly constructed music. One of the best things, on a beautifully made and intriguing record, is the bassoon virtuosity heard in Pleyel's minuet movement. The Mozart flute works are not well recorded. Also, those who remember the liquid notes of Marcel Moyse in old recordings of K.313 will not take to the quality of the German instrument used here. The combined understanding of Mozart and string music that went into the Stern-Primrose-Casals double Concerto must be unequalled by any other chance combination of soloists and conductor. It is a wonderful performance. Also very good is Heifetz' "Turkish" and the paired Bruch work is played and recorded much better than other recent versions.

The world knows Myra Hess' interpretation of the Schumann Concerto and here she is beautifully accompanied and recorded. How much the romantic piano concerto owes to Robert Schumann; how little, unfortunately, its modern female exponents owe to Myra Hess.

Vaughan Williams: *The Symphonies*.\* London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Boult.

A Sea Symphony. (1910). Decca LXT 2907-8.

A London Symphony. (1914). 2693.

Pastoral Symphony. (1921). 2787.

Symphony no. 4 in F minor (1935). 2909.

Symphony no. 5 in D. (1943). 2910.

Symphony no. 6 in E minor. (1947). 2911.

Sinfonia Antartica. (1952). 2912.

It must first be said that these are magnificent recordings and superb performances. Boult secures some of the finest sustained playing we have heard from the L.P.O. At

\* Strongly recommended.

the end of the sixth Symphony, the composer thanks the players in a moving little speech and to his thanks we add our own, including in them the Decca engineers. These records carry the testimony of a great man and the musical inheritance of an English epoch. Made, as they were, in the composer's presence, they bear the flavour of authenticity and an air of critical devotion opposed to that routine and commercial expediency which sometimes damps recorded great music.

An important outcome of this issue could be the re-assessment of Vaughan Williams' symphonies by critics and writers. Hubert Foss has said regarding the outpourings of his colleagues, "... in this music there is something that writers cannot explain, even if they can understand it". That point was made with the sixth Symphony in mind. It is true of all the rest. Yet there is so much that appears to help us to "explain". Behind the first Symphony is the English choral tradition, the spirit of the teacher Stanford and the national love of ocean-going. The Second shows a young man who has found his strength, reacting to the greatest city he has lived in. In the Third, the finder of folk tunes and the son of a country vicarage has re-created the ageless charm of country living, and shed his early youth in music. Yes, it used to be easy to explain Vaughan Williams.

The Fourth shocked the explainers. It came, as we can now see, with its unity, logic and clarity, merely as the composer's acknowledgment that music is absolute: that music is a method of formulating truth. It left, in short, nothing to be explained. In spite, too, of its vigour and its discords and its newness, it came as an essentially *humble* acknowledgment. It asked a question: what to do, where to go—now that full stature has been reached?

Where Vaughan Williams went was his own way, and the shining, hopeful fifth Symphony appeared.

Here that other school of explainers who had talked of Hardy and Blake and Donne were, by the composer himself, offered Bunyan to help explain the Fifth. *Job and Flos Campi* had been heard and digested by now, and we talked much of Englishry, metaphysics and mysticism; until it dawned on us that the D major Symphony was only related to Bunyan because it was inspired by *faith*—which was equally true of Beethoven's Ninth or Bach's B minor Mass. If, now, we had begun to grasp the fact of Vaughan Williams' universality, we realized it fully with the E minor Symphony. In this work, with its parade of intellect in the early movements and the visionary compulsion of its epilogue, Vaughan Williams drives home the truth. His music has as little to do with the isolated elements of his life and his time and his passions as had those same elements with the last quartets of Beethoven: it has to do with their integration into the truth—the truth that is pure music.

There remains the seventh Symphony. It were better that he had not given it its name. But he goes his own way still and it is, again, his humility, the humility of the dedicated genius, that parades the heroism of a few well-known human beings as the spring of a universal expression. Between the *Sea* Symphony and the *Antartica* is a lifetime; it is of no consequence whatever that the first should draw its inspiration from "All Seas and all ships" and the last from a single incident in time. It does not really matter that the first three of the symphonies and the last one have names to do with seas and city and countryside and that five of the seven have literary or historical connotations. These works are the boundaries within which a universal genius has developed; and each step has been a work of art. That is sufficient.

Weber: *Konzertstück in F minor, op. 79\** and

Liszt: *Concerto no. 1 in E flat.*

P. Mildner and The RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Berlin, c. Rother.

Telefunken LGX 66022.

*Concerto no. 1 in E flat and no. 2 in A.*

Frugoni and Pro Musica Symphony Orchestra, Vienna, c. Swarowsky. Vox PL 8390.

\* Strongly recommended.

*Brahms: Violin Concerto in D, op. 77.*

Ferras and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Schuricht. Decca LXT 2949.

There is a nice choice to be made between the Liszt of Frugoni and of Fräulein Mildner. His rendering of the E flat Concerto is more thrilling than hers, which has, in places, more poetry than his. Anyone who, as he should, gets fun out of the celebrated triangle passages, will prefer the Vox issue, where they can really be heard. Anyone preferring, as he should, the *Konzertstück* to the Liszt A minor work, will not go wrong with Mildner. Weber's musical fairy tale is just her weight and she gives an impeccable performance, beautifully accompanied. The Vox issue is technically the better of two passable recordings.

Though a pleasant performance and an acceptable recording, the Decca Brahms violin Concerto is not to be preferred to the His Master's Voice version (de Vito and Philharmonia, ALP 1104). The solo violin produces a curious effect of fading towards the end of short passages. As a result, and in spite of an obvious grasp of the work and much very beautiful passage-playing, the soloist provides an effect of discontinuity which irritates the ear.

*Suppé: Poet and Peasant overture and*

*Offenbach: Orpheus in the Underworld overture.*

L'Orchestre Symphonique de la Radiodiffusion Belge, c. André.

Telefunken TM 68026.

*Saint-Saëns: La Jeunesse d'Hercule; Danse Macabre;*

*Phaeton; Le Rouet d'Omphale.\**

L'Orchestre des Concerts Colonne, c. Fourestier.

Columbia 33 CX 1158.

*Debussy: Jeux and Six Épigaphes Antiques.*

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet.

Decca LXT 2927.

*Barber: Adagio for Strings.*

*Diamond: Rounds.*

*Copland: Quiet City and*

*Creston: Two Choric Dances.*

The Concert Arts Orchestra, c. Golschmann.

Capitol CTL 7056.

The world's two most popular light overtures are offered on a very poor record. Apart from acid strings and raucous ensemble contributed by the engineers, the conductor drives his players dead against the spirit of both works. The *Orpheus* waltz is played as a stiffish scherzo and even the *galop* is a flop: The *Poet* gabbles. Saint-Saëns' complete symphonic poems are marvellously recorded; the performances are quite as good as Ansermet's recent *Danse Macabre* and *Omphale* issue (Decca LW 5030). Ansermet's present Debussy offering cannot be recommended. The *Épigaphes Antiques* were originally written as accompaniments to a privately recited version of *Chansons de Bilitis* and were played by an instrumental trio. When it came to publishing the work Debussy cast it for piano. Ansermet's weighty arrangement is pleasant, but a palpable misconception. *Jeux* shows most plainly Diaghilev's generally baleful influence on the musicians of his time; for him even Debussy could write rubbish; and Ansermet here searches all too conscientiously amongst the resulting chaff for such grains as are to be found.

The symposium of "Contemporary American Music" (so called on the label) is a beautifully made, informative and poignant record. Barber's well-known piece approaches a remote serenity—the remaining three are essays in introspection and the collective work is in spirit and very sound more nearly like a Tchaikovsky symphony than is good for contemporary music, American or otherwise. Playing is beautiful and recording unusually faithful.

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\*Strongly recommended.

**Mozart:** *Symphony no. 30 in D, K.202* and  
*Serenade: "Eine kleine Nachtmusik", K.525.*  
 The Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, c. Keilberth. Telefunken LGX 66025.

**Schubert:** *Symphony no. 8 in B minor.*  
 Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Scherchen and  
*Rosamunde—Incidental music, op. 26.*  
 Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Meylan. Supraphon LPV 42.

**Bruckner:** *Symphony no. 4 in E flat\** and

**Sibelius:** *Symphony no. 7 in C, op. 105.*  
 The Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, c. van Kempen.

Telefunken LGX 66026-7.

**Mahler:** *Symphony no. 1 in D.\**  
 Pro Musica Symphony, Vienna, c. Horenstein. Vox PL 8050.

Keilberth's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* has already been dealt with (MR, XV/2, p. 159) in its medium-play recording. Something of the square and magisterial quality that mars that performance also gets into the K.202 Symphony; so far as these records show, Keilberth is not an ideal Mozart conductor. The recordings are excellent. Both orchestras play very beautifully in the Supraphon Schubert issue. The Overture apart, we are given a complete recording of the orchestral pieces from *Rosamunde* and this side can be strongly recommended. Scherchen, surprisingly, fails with the *Unfinished*. Making two always distinct choruses of wood-wind and strings, he is able to paint all the structural beauties of the first movement in which orchestral tone is highly integrated in the score. The same approach, with over-sharp division of choruses, is fatal to the second movement where less generative themes are laid out in a greater isolation of tone values. In his fourth Symphony Bruckner came very near to saying something of what Schubert said in the *Unfinished*. By very narrow margins of inspiration and techniques, it seems, he misses. But the "Romantic" Symphony is a grand work, the composer making up to us in warm human sentiment and friendly philosophy what is missing in Schubertian poignancy. The work gets a remarkable performance equalled by that of Sibelius' seventh Symphony on the odd side; the recording is superb. Elsewhere in this issue I have drawn attention to the excellence of Steinberg and The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in Mahler's first Symphony. One doubts if there is room for two good issues of this work, but there can be no doubt that Horenstein and the Vienna players have also produced a very fine recording and the field will have to be shared. Any buyer who wants this work can safely buy either issue without a hearing.

**Handel-Beecham:** *Gavotte, Bourrée, Musette and Minuet from "The Faithful Shepherd".\**  
 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham. Columbia LX 1600.

**Gluck:** *Alceste overture.*  
 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Gui. His Master's Voice DB 21616.

**Beethoven:** *Symphony no. 1 in C, op. 21.*  
 L'Orchestre Symphonique de la Radiodiffusion Belge, c. André. Telefunken LGM 65020.

**Rimsky-Korsakov:** *Capriccio espagnol* and *Le Coq d'Or, Ballet Suite.*  
 French National Symphony Orchestra, c. Desormière. Capitol CTL 7020.

**Delius:** *On hearing the first cuckoo in Spring* and *The walk to the paradise garden.*  
 London Symphony Orchestra, c. Collins. Decca LW 5036.

**Sibelius:** *Symphony no. 2 in D, op. 43.*  
 London Symphony Orchestra, c. Collins. Decca LXT 2815.

Sir Thomas plays his own Handel arrangements as if he were pleased with himself and Handel; the recording is wonderful. *Alceste* is badly recorded, with wiry strings the

\* Strongly recommended.



chief trouble. Franz André gets really stylish Beethoven from his Belgian orchestra, but again, recording is faulty. Marked acoustic faults are:—colossal echo after every isolated chord, and secondly, the difference between *p*, when half the orchestra sounds to have gone home, and *ff* when the orchestra appears to have been augmented by at least two others. When one thinks of Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Glinka, Rimsky, and even small fry like Chabrier, it is surprising how regularly Spanish rhythms lead to banality. (Ravel is an exception; he knew too much about rhythm, if not about Spain.) *Capriccio espagnol* wears as badly as the rest; here it gets a good airing as do the *Coq d'Or* pieces which are so much better music. The recording is not perfect, but if one accepts somewhat wheezy tone in the violin solos on the Spanish side, it will pass.

Anthony Collins and L.S.O. have produced a quite lovely Delius record with these two familiar pieces. Let us hope they do more. The second Sibelius Symphony is also extremely well played. The recording is good. J. B.

Haydn: *Mass in B flat, "Heiligmesse"*.

Copenhagen Boys' and Men's Choirs, State Opera Orchestra, c. Wöldike (by arrangement with the Haydn Society of Boston). Parlophone PMA 1010.

Mozart: *Serenades*, 11 in E flat (K.375) and 12 in C minor (K.388).

Kell Chamber Players, c. Reginald Kell.

Brunswick AXTL 1013.

Respighi: *Pines of Rome and Fountains of Rome*.

N.B.C. Orchestra, c. Toscanini

His Master's Voice ALP 1101.

Brahms: *Four Serious Songs*.

Kathleen Ferrier and John Newmark.

Decca LW 5094.

Weber: *Der Freischütz*: "Wie nahte mir der Schlummer"—"Leise, leise" (Act 1). *Und ob die Wolke sie verhüllt* (Act 2).

Traute Richter—Städtische Oper orchestra, Berlin, c. Artur Rother.

Telefunken TM 68017.

Haydn's "Heiligmesse" of 1796 (no. 1 in both the Breitkopf and Novello editions) is a welcome addition to the growing library of recorded Haydn. It is more businesslike than many, with little work for the soloists (anonymous in this recording) and full of fascinating orchestral play. Most of the writing, until the *Benedictus* is reached, is taut and eloquent, with real urgency and understanding in the *Kyrie*, a canonic *Incarnatus* and *Crucifixus*—a wonderful interplay of E flat major and minor—and a *Benedictus* not far in spirit from the *adagio* of the 102nd Symphony. The "secular" and "wordly" Haydn adds a postscript in a gay and dancing *Dona nobis* after a disturbing and disturbed *Agnus Dei*. It is surely time for an aesthetic reconsideration of the Viennese Mass.

The performance is taut and alert, but the basses of the choir are weak and make too little effect when they are not instrumentally doubled—for example, in the *Benedictus*, where they answer the upper voices under a high-pitched violin phrase. The Copenhagen boys are not English choristers; their tone is less "produced" and they do not warble. In the exhilarating fugues that close the *Gloria* and *Credo* they tend to run short of breath, but their brightness and naturalness of tone are more than compensation. With these reservations, the record is one to be highly recommended.

The Kell Chamber Players' performance of the wind serenades K.375 and K.388 is good, but the recording does it a little less than justice. There is too little range of dynamics between *forte* and *piano*; several times one would assume passages alternating between the two to be marked *mf*—*sfz*—*mf*. The slow movement of K.375—an extremely beautiful movement—opens with a wobble in the tone of the clarinet as it first states the theme, and groups of tied *staccato* notes (e.g. six bars from the end of the first movement of K.375) tend to melt together. In this work, the second minuet is played so quickly that it seems to rob the finale of apparent pace, though the finale is actually taken as quickly as clarity allows. The E flat work is everything we understand by the word "Serenade", with a ravishing *adagio* and a high-spirited last movement. The C minor, which is the better recording of the two, belongs to the world of the G minor Symphony, which

followed it six years later. A purist might object that Mozart probably contemplated more neutrally-toned bassoons than the players use, but the quasi-saxophone *timbre* here assists clarity. I have not heard the Nixa record of these works made by Vienna Philharmonic players, but allowing for the unemphatic recording, I doubt if in an imperfect world it can offer much to be chosen in place of this.

Toscanini's performance of Respighi's *Fountains of Rome* and *Pines of Rome* leaves one sorry that one does not like the music more and gives the composer almost everything he could ask. All that is missing is the actual voice of the organ in the climaxes; we feel its weight but cannot pick out its distinctive sound. For the rest, the recording is intensely vivid—the trumpet of the "Catacombs" section of *The Pines* is actually a *distant* trumpet—and the atmosphere is wonderfully captured. The playing is triumphantly good, and the maestro's control can be felt in every bar.

Traute Richter's singing of Agathe's two big *arias* from *der Freischütz* is well in character; this is Weber's heroine until she reaches the big tune in *Leise, leise*, when she becomes too busy singing the actual notes to take much care about phrasing or the value of words; she begins to betray weaknesses above the stave. *Ob die Wolke*, which is far less gruelling, is completely satisfactory. The fault is perhaps Weber's for creating a heroine who must vocally combine the attributes of Wordsworth's Lucy Grey and Beethoven's Leonora. The disc is ennobled by the orchestral playing under Rother, with a wonderfully silky cello solo in the second side. The transfer of Kathleen Ferrier's performance of the *Four Serious Songs* is completely successful; like its LP original, it comes near to reconciling us to the use of a female voice in the work. Ferrier sings with that eloquent justice of phrasing and complete absorption in the composer's purposes we shall probably miss for a long time. H. R.

*Handel: Organ Concertos, nos. 13-16.\**

Eva Hölderlin and Pro Musica Orchestra, Stuttgart, c. Rolf Reinhardt.

Vox PL 7802/1-2.

A reverent, yet lively performance of these neglected masterpieces. The soloist's phrasing is well thought out, and unlike so many organists, she is able to give exact definition to all note-values, from *legatissimo* to *staccatissimo*. Occasionally, as in the finale of no. 13, she gets flustered and hurries. In the close imitations between organ and orchestra in that work (nicknamed "the cuckoo and the nightingale") the orchestra should not make any *crescendo* when the organ, following on its heels, cannot do so. The wind ensembles in the rousing F major Concerto (no. 16) are balanced meticulously, and here and elsewhere the terraces of sound characteristic of Handel's style are greatly helped by the clear and spacious recording.

*Haydn: Grosse Orgelmesse.*

Elisabeth Roon, soprano; Hildegard Rössl-Majdan, contralto; Waldemar Kmentt, tenor; Walter Berry, bass. Bruno Seidlhofer, organ. Akademie Kammerchor. Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Ferdinand Grossmann.

Vox PL 7020.

Pohl's remark that this Mass is old-fashioned can only apply to the rather rapid *Benedictus*; for the rest, the work is packed with brilliant ideas, spacious yet intense counterpoint, and moments of genuine devotion such as the *Gratias*. The performance is efficient rather than musical, the ensemble being better with regard to rhythm than to phrasing. In the *Agnus Dei*, the first violins perpetrate some of those slow slides which are still beloved of Viennese orchestras. Apart from the bass whose voice production is seriously wrong, the solo singers are commendable; best perhaps the contralto in her *Et resurrexit* solo. The choral singing becomes shrill from *g''* up, and so does the recording of all high frequencies. Each side deteriorates markedly towards the spindle.

\* Strongly recommended.

*Vivaldi: Serenata a tre. "La Ninfa e il Pastore".*

Grete Rapisardi-Savio, soprano; Silvana Zanolli, soprano; Alfredo Bianchini, tenor. Orchestra da Camera di Milano, c. Edwin Löhrer. Vox PL 7990.

This enchanting *rococo* fancy keeps our interest for the better part of an hour by the unending variety of moods within its framework of solos, recitatives and ensembles, and Vivaldi's great finesse of harmony and rhythm. The three singers go at it with immense gusto and little refinement. The musical realism that informs their characterizations is indeed desirable in "old music"; not so their disregard of the intra-musical import of periods and modulations. As is apparent from some orchestral passages (*cf.* the beginning of side 2) the conductor has that sense of style; so prolonged coaching might have produced better results. On the technical side, the tenor is comparatively safest. Both sopranos, although gifted with good natural material, are slapdash in *coloratura*, and their intonation falls short of equal temperament in a work which often asks for creative (*i.e.* harmonic) intonation. The recording is fair.

*Alessandro Stradella: Six Trio Sonatas. (D minor, B flat major, A minor, D major, F major, D major.)*

Trio di Bolzano. Nunzio Montanari, piano; Giannino Capi, violin; Antonio Valisi, cello. Vox PL 8380.

The initial shock of hearing a piano in this music soon wears off since the string-playing is adapted to the full tone of the modern instrument, and the sonatas are dramatic enough to bear a wide dynamic range, including *crescendi* and *decrescendi*. The piano is not merely a *continuo* instrument but takes its share in the imitative counterpoint of these well-written, far-ranging works of this "modernistic" seventeenth-century composer. The cellist's tone is often edgy, and the pianist's touch is sometimes *legato*, as in the scales of the A minor Sonata, while the violin plays the same passages off the string.

*Buxtehude: Church Cantatas for Soprano Solo. No. 14, Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein reines Herz. No. 10, O clemens, O milis, O coelestis Pater. No. 6, Herr, wenn ich nur Dich hab'. No. 8, Ich sprach in meinem Herzen. No. 1, Also hat Gott die Welt geliebet.*

Margot Guillaume, soprano. Instrumental Ensemble of the Bach Anniversary, Hamburg. Marie-Louise Bechert, conductor and organist.

Vox PL 7330.

Any lover of Bach should acquaint himself with this important "precursor", not indeed to trace the development of the Church cantata, but to appreciate the validity of so different an approach to the same subject. Miss Guillaume has a fresh, agreeable voice and sings quite on pitch. Though her phrasing is stylish, she may perhaps be a little too influenced by the present German *Sachlichkeit* in the interpretation of old music. Neither she nor the strings have any qualms over doing hearty passages in a heartily accented manner, but shy away from *espressivo* in lyrical phrases such as the sudden modulations to A minor in the first part of no. 8—a very interesting *durchkomponierte scena*. The ensemble of singer, strings and organ is excellent save for the frequent false relations, characteristic of Buxtehude, which seem to give the players a bad conscience, whereas exactly the reverse is wanted. At the beginning of side 1 the violins drown the singer; side 2 is well focussed.

*Motets of the Venetian School. Second Series. [17 Motets by Asola, Croce, Willaert, Porta, Ruffa, Vecchi, Nasco, Ingegneri.]*

Choir of the Capella di Treviso, c. Mgs. Giovanni d'Alessi.

Vox PL 8610.

Historical interest in these a *capella* compositions will give way to something better for anyone who takes the trouble to listen to each piece three times. The recording, apparently made in a hall or in a church, is not kind to the intricate counterpoint. A resonant room may not always disturb a live performance but will invariably blur a recording of voices.

P. H.

## Correspondence

1970, Cheremoya,  
Hollywood 28, Calif.  
4th September, 1954.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—When some writer fifty years ago stated that "the harpsichord and clavichord were only crude forerunners of the modern piano" this nonsense could be excused on the grounds that so little was known about them at that time; to-day, however, when Arthur Briskier says the same thing it can only mean that the increased use of these instruments in concerts and especially recordings is beginning to hurt and the piano brigade is finally on the defensive.

Sincerely,  
SOL BABITZ.

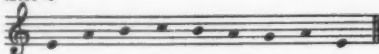
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### ERRATUM

"VAUGHAN WILLIAMS AND FOLK-SONG"

On page 109 of the May issue of this year Example 4 should read:—

Ex. 4



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